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THE WORKS OF

# GEORGE ELIOT

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THE WORKS OF GEORGE ELIOT

VOLUME EIGHTEEN

# LIFE OF GEORGE ELIOT

PART I.

GEORGE ELIOT

*From the painting by Sir Frederick Burton, 1864*
*In the National Portrait Gallery*

NEW YORK
THE JENSON SOCIETY

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# *Illustrations*

George Eliot. From the painting by Sir Frederick Burton, 1864 . . . . . *Frontispiece*

Robert Evans. Reproduced from a miniature PAGE 150
*By kind permission of Messrs. Harper & Brothers*

# *George Eliot's Life*

## INTRODUCTORY SKETCH OF CHILDHOOD

"*NOV.* 22, 1819. — Mary Ann Evans was born at Arbury Farm,[1] at five o'clock this morning."

This is an entry in Mr. Robert Evans's handwriting on the page of an old diary that now lies before me, and records, with characteristic precision, the birth of his youngest child, afterwards known to the world as George Eliot. Let us pause for a moment to pay its due homage to the precision, because it was in all probability to this most noteworthy quality of her father's nature that the future author was indebted for one of the principal elements of her own after success, — the enormous faculty for taking pains. The baby was born on St. Cecilia's day, and Mr. Evans, being a good Churchman, takes her, on the 29th November, to be baptised in the church at Chilvers Coton, — the parish in which Arbury Farm lies, — a church destined to impress itself strongly on the child's imagination, and to be known by many people in many lands afterwards as Shepperton Church. The father was a remarkable man, and many of the leading traits in his character are to be found

[1] The farm is also known as the South Farm, Arbury.

in Adam Bede and in Caleb Garth, — although, of course, neither of these is a portrait. He was born in 1773, at Roston Common, in the parish of Norbury, in the county of Derby, son of a George Evans, who carried on the business of builder and carpenter there: the Evans family having come originally from Northop, in Flintshire. Robert was brought up to the business, and after a time changed his residence to Ellastone, in Staffordshire. About 1799, or a little before, he held a farm of Mr. Francis Newdigate at Kirk Hallam, in Derbyshire, and became his agent. On Sir Roger Newdigate's death, the Arbury estate came to Mr. Francis Newdigate for his life, and Mr. Evans accompanied him into Warwickshire in 1806 in the capacity of agent. In 1801 he had married Harriott Poynton, by whom he had two children, — Robert, born 1802, at Ellastone, and Frances Lucy, born 1805, at Kirk Hallam. His first wife died in 1809; and on 8th February, 1813, he married Christiana Pearson, by whom he had three children, — Christiana, born 1814; Isaac, born 1816; and Mary Ann, born 1819. Shortly after the last child's birth, Robert, the son, became the agent, under his father, for the Kirk Hallam property, and lived there with his sister Frances, who afterwards married a Mr. Houghton. In March, 1820, when the baby girl was only four months old, the Evans family removed to Griff, a charming red-brick, ivy-covered house on the Arbury estate, — "the warm little nest where her affections were fledged," — and there George Eliot spent the first twenty-one years of her life.

Let us remember what the England was upon which this observant child opened her eyes.

The date of her birth was removed from the beginning of the French Revolution by just the same period of time as separates a child born this year, 1884, from the beginning of the Crimean War. To a man of forty-six to-day, the latter event seems but of yesterday. It took place at a very impressionable period of his life, and the remembrance of every detail is perfectly vivid. Mr. Evans was forty-six when his youngest child was born. He was a youth of sixteen when the Revolution began, and that mighty event, with all its consequences, had left an indelible impression on him, and the convictions and conclusions it had fostered in his mind permeated through to his children, and entered as an indestructible element into the susceptible soul of his youngest daughter. There are bits in the paper "Looking Backward," in "Theophrastus Such," which are true autobiography.

"In my earliest remembrance of my father his hair was already grey, for I was his youngest child; and it seemed to me that advanced age was appropriate to a father, as indeed in all respects I considered him a parent so much to my honour that the mention of my relationship to him was likely to secure me regard among those to whom I was otherwise a stranger, — his stories from his life including so many names of distant persons that my imagination placed no limit to his acquaintanceship. . . . Nor can I be sorry, though myself given to meditative if not active innovation, that my father was a Tory who had not exactly a dislike to innovators and dissenters, but a slight opinion of them as persons of ill-founded self-confidence. . . . And I often smile at my consciousness that certain conservative preposses-

sions have mingled themselves for me with the influences of our midland scenery, from the tops of the elms down to the buttercups and the little wayside vetches. Naturally enough. That part of my father's prime to which he oftenest referred had fallen on the days when the great wave of political enthusiasm and belief in a speedy regeneration of all things had ebbed, and the supposed millennial initiative of France was turning into a Napoleonic empire. . . . To my father's mind the noisy teachers of revolutionary doctrine were, to speak mildly, a variable mixture of the fool and the scoundrel; the welfare of the nation lay in a strong Government which could maintain order; and I was accustomed to hear him utter the word 'Government' in a tone that charged it with awe, and made it part of my effective religion, in contrast with the word 'rebel,' which seemed to carry the stamp of evil in its syllables, and, lit by the fact that Satan was the first rebel, made an argument dispensing with more detailed inquiry."

This early association of ideas must always be borne in mind, as it is the key to a great deal in the mental attitude of the future thinker and writer. It is the foundation of the latent Conservative bias.

The year 1819 is memorable as a culminating period of bad times and political discontent in England. The nation was suffering acutely from the reaction after the excitement of the last Napoleonic war. George IV. did not come to the throne till January, 1820, so that George Eliot was born in the reign of George III. The trial of Queen Caroline was the topic of absorbing public interest. Waterloo was not yet an affair of five years old. Byron had four years, and Goethe had thirteen

years, still to live. The last of Miss Austen's novels had been published only eighteen months, and the first of the Waverley series only six years before. Thackeray and Dickens were boys at school, and George Sand, as a girl of fifteen, was leaving her loved freedom on the banks of the Indre for the Couvent des Anglaises at Paris. That "Greater Britain" (Canada and Australia), which to-day forms so large a reading public, was then scarcely more than a geographical expression, with less than half a million of inhabitants, all told, where at present there are eight million; and in the United States, where more copies of George Eliot's books are now sold than in any other quarter of the world, the population then numbered less than ten million where to-day it is fifty-five million. Including Great Britain, these English-speaking races have increased from thirty million in 1820 to one hundred million in 1884; and with the corresponding increase in education we can form some conception how a popular English writer's fame has widened its circle.

There was a remoteness about a detached country house, in the England of those days, difficult for us to conceive now with our railways, penny post, and telegraphs; nor is the Warwickshire country about Griff an exhilarating surrounding. There are neither hills nor vales, — no rivers, lakes, or sea, — nothing but a monotonous succession of green fields and hedgerows, with some fine trees. The only water to be seen is the "brown canal." The effect of such a landscape on an ordinary observer is not inspiring, but "effective magic is transcendent nature;" and with her transcendent nature George Eliot has transfigured these scenes, dear to midland souls, into many an

idyllic picture, known to those who know her books. In her childhood the great event of the day was the passing of the coach before the gate of Griff house, which lies at a bend of the highroad between Coventry and Nuneaton, and within a couple of miles of the mining village of Bedworth, where the land began "to be blackened with coal-pits, the rattle of handlooms to be heard in hamlets and villages. Here were powerful men walking queerly with knees bent outward from squatting in the mine, going home to throw themselves down in their blackened flannel and sleep through the daylight, then rise and spend much of their high wages at the ale-house with their fellows of the Benefit Club; here the pale eager faces of hand-loom-weavers, men and women, haggard from sitting up late at night to finish the week's work, hardly begun till the Wednesday. Everywhere the cottages and the small children were dirty, for the languid mothers gave their strength to the loom; pious Dissenting women, perhaps, who took life patiently, and thought that salvation depended chiefly on predestination, and not at all on cleanliness. The gables of Dissenting chapels now made a visible sign of religion, and of a meeting-place to counterbalance the ale-house, even in the hamlets. . . . Here was a population not convinced that old England was as good as possible; here were multitudinous men and women aware that their religion was not exactly the religion of their rulers, who might therefore be better than they were, and who, if better, might alter many things which now made the world perhaps more painful than it need be, and certainly more sinful. Yet there were the grey steeples too, and the churchyards, with their grassy mounds and venerable

headstones, sleeping in the sunlight; there were broad fields and homesteads, and fine old woods covering a rising ground, or stretching far by the roadside, allowing only peeps at the park and mansion which they shut in from the working-day world. In these midland districts the traveller passed rapidly from one phase of English life to another: after looking down on a village dingy with coal-dust, noisy with the shaking of looms, he might skirt a parish all of fields, high hedges, and deep-rutted lanes; after the coach had rattled over the pavement of a manufacturing town, the scene of riots and trades-union meetings, it would take him in another ten minutes into a rural region, where the neighbourhood of the town was only felt in the advantages of a near market for corn, cheese, and hay, and where men with a considerable banking account were accustomed to say that 'they never meddled with politics themselves.'" [1]

We can imagine the excitement of a little four-year-old girl and her seven-year-old brother waiting on bright frosty mornings to hear the far-off ringing beat of the horses' feet upon the hard ground, and then to see the gallant appearance of the four greys, with coachman and guard in scarlet, outside passengers muffled up in furs, and baskets of game and other packages hanging behind the boot, as his Majesty's mail swung cheerily round on its way from Birmingham to Stamford. Two coaches passed the door daily, — one from Birmingham at 10 o'clock in the morning, the other from Stamford at 3 o'clock in the afternoon. These were the chief connecting links between the household at Griff and the outside world. Other-

[1] "Felix Holt," — Introduction.

wise life went on with that monotonous regularity which distinguishes the country from the town. And it is to these circumstances of her early life that a great part of the quality of George Eliot's writing is due, and that she holds the place she has attained in English literature. Her roots were down in the pre-railroad, pre-telegraphic period, — the days of fine old leisure, — but the fruit was formed during an era of extraordinary activity in scientific and mechanical discovery. Her genius was the outcome of these conditions. It could not have existed in the same form deprived of either influence. Her father was busy both with his own farm work and increasing agency business. He was already remarked in Warwickshire for his knowledge and judgment in all matters relating to land, and for his general trustworthiness and high character, so that he was constantly selected as arbitrator and valuer. He had a wonderful eye, especially for valuing woods, and could calculate with almost absolute precision the quantity of available timber in a standing tree. In addition to his merits as a man of business, he had the good fortune to possess the warm friendship and consistent support of Colonel Newdigate of Astley Castle, son of Mr. Francis Newdigate of Arbury, and it was mainly through the Colonel's introduction and influence that Mr. Evans became agent also to Lord Aylesford, Lord Lifford, Mr. Bromley Davenport, and several others.

His position cannot be better summed up than in the words of his daughter, writing to Mr. Bray on 30th September, 1859, in regard to some one who had written of her, after the appearance of "Adam Bede," as a "self-educated farmer's daughter."

"My father did not raise himself from being an artisan to be a farmer: he raised himself from being an artisan to be a man whose extensive knowledge in very varied practical departments made his services valued through several counties. He had large knowledge of building, of mines, of plantations, of various branches of valuation and measurement, — of all that is essential to the management of large estates. He was held by those competent to judge as *unique* amongst land agents for his manifold knowledge and experience, which enabled him to save the special fees usually paid by landowners for special opinions on the different questions incident to the proprietorship of land. So far as I am personally concerned, I should not write a stroke to prevent any one, in the zeal of antithetic eloquence, from calling me a tinker's daughter; but if my father is to be mentioned at all, — if he is to be identified with an imaginary character, — my piety towards his memory calls on me to point out to those who are supposed to speak with information what he really achieved in life."

Mr. Evans was also — like Adam Bede — noteworthy for his extraordinary physical strength and determination of character. There is a story told of him, that one day when he was travelling on the top of a coach, down in Kent, a decent woman sitting next him complained that a great hulking sailor on her other side was making himself offensive. Mr. Evans changed places with the woman, and, taking the sailor by the collar, forced him down under the seat, and held him there with an iron hand for the remainder of the stage; and at Griff it is still remembered that the master happening to pass one day whilst a couple of labourers

were waiting for a third to help to move the high heavy ladder used for thatching ricks, braced himself up to a great effort, and carried the ladder alone and unaided from one rick to the other, to the wide-eyed wonder and admiration of his men. With all this strength, however, both of body and of character, he seems to have combined a certain self-distrust, owing perhaps to his early imperfect education, which resulted in a general submissiveness in his domestic relations, more or less portrayed in the character of Mr. Garth.

His second wife was a woman with an unusual amount of natural force, — a shrewd practical person, with a considerable dash of the Mrs. Poyser vein in her. Hers was an affectionate, warm-hearted nature, and her children, on whom she cast "the benediction of her gaze," were thoroughly attached to her. She came of a race of yeomen, and her social position was therefore rather better than her husband's at the time of their marriage. Her family are, no doubt, prototypes of the Dodsons in the "Mill on the Floss." There were three other sisters married and all living in the neighbourhood of Griff, — Mrs. Everard, Mrs. Johnson, and Mrs. Garner, — and probably Mr. Evans heard a good deal about "the traditions in the Pearson family." Mrs. Evans was a very active hard-working woman, but shortly after her last child's birth she became ailing in health, and consequently her eldest girl, Christiana, was sent to school at a very early age, to Miss Lathom's at Attleboro, — a village a mile or two from Griff, — whilst the two younger children spent some part of their time every day at the cottage of a Mrs. Moore, who kept a Dame's school close to Griff gates. The little girl very early became possessed with the

idea that she was going to be a personage in the world; and Mr. Charles Lewes has told me an anecdote which George Eliot related of herself as characteristic of this period of her childhood. When she was only four years old, she recollected playing on the piano, of which she did not know one note, in order to impress the servant with a proper notion of her acquirements and generally distinguished position. This was the time when the love for her brother grew in to the child's affections. She used always to be at his heels, insisting on doing everything he did. She was not in these baby-days in the least precocious in learning. In fact, her half-sister, Mrs. Houghton, — who was some fourteen years her senior, — told me that the child learned to read with some difficulty; but Mr. Isaac Evans says that this was not from any slowness in apprehension, but because she liked playing so much better. Mere sharpness, however, was not a characteristic of her mind. Hers was a large, slow-growing nature; and I think it is at any rate certain that there was nothing of the infant phenomenon about her. In her moral development she showed, from the earliest years, the trait that was most marked in her all through life, — namely, the absolute need of some one person who should be all in all to her, and to whom she should be all in all. Very jealous in her affections, and easily moved to smiles or tears, she was of a nature capable of the keenest enjoyment and the keenest suffering, knowing " all the wealth and all the woe " of a preeminently exclusive disposition. She was affectionate, proud, and sensitive in the highest degree.

The sort of happiness that belongs to this budding time of life — from the age of three to five — is apt to impress itself very strongly on the mem-

ory; and it is this period which is referred to in the Brother and Sister Sonnet, "But were another childhood's world my share, I would be born a little sister there." When her brother was eight years old, he was sent to school at Coventry, and, her mother continuing in very delicate health, the little Mary Ann, now five years of age, went to join her sister at Miss Lathom's school at Attleboro, where they continued as boarders for three or four years, coming occasionally home to Griff on Saturdays. During one of our walks at Witley, in 1880, my wife mentioned to me that what chiefly remained in her recollection about this very early school-life was the difficulty of getting near enough the fire in winter, to become thoroughly warmed, owing to the circle of girls forming round too narrow a fireplace. This suffering from cold was the beginning of a low general state of health: also at this time she began to be subject to fears at night, — "the susceptibility to terror," — which she has described as haunting Gwendolen Harleth in her childhood. The other girls in the school, who were all naturally very much older, made a great pet of the child, and used to call her "little mamma," and she was not unhappy except at nights; but she told me that this liability to have "all her soul become a quivering fear," which remained with her afterwards, had been one of the supremely important influences dominating at times her future life. Mr. Isaac Evans's chief recollection of this period is the delight of the little sister at his homecoming for holidays, and her anxiety to know all that he had been doing and learning. The eldest child, who went by the name of Chrissey, was the chief favourite of the aunts, as she was always neat and tidy, and used to spend a great deal of her

time with them, whilst the other two were inseparable playfellows at home. The boy was his mother's pet, and the girl her father's. They had everything to make children happy at Griff, — a delightful old-fashioned garden, — a pond, and the canal to fish in, — and the farm offices, close to the house, — "the long cow-shed where generations of the milky mothers have stood patiently, — the broad-shouldered barns where the old-fashioned flail once made resonant music," and where butter-making and cheese-making were carried on with great vigour by Mrs. Evans.

Anyone, about this time, who happened to look through the window on the left-hand side of the door of Griff house, would have seen a pretty picture in the dining-room on Saturday evenings after tea. The powerful middle-aged man with the strongly marked features sits in his deep leather-covered arm-chair, at the right-hand corner of the ruddy fireplace, with the head of "the little wench" between his knees. The child turns over the book with pictures that she wishes her father to explain to her, — or that perhaps she prefers explaining to him. Her rebellious hair is all over her eyes, much vexing the pale, energetic mother, who sits on the opposite side of the fire, cumbered with much service, letting no instant of time escape the inevitable click of the knitting-needles, — accompanied by epigrammatic speech. The elder girl, prim and tidy, with her work before her, is by her mother's side; and the brother, between the two groups, keeps assuring himself by perpetual search that none of his favourite means of amusement are escaping from his pockets. The father is already very proud of the astonishing and growing intelligence of his little girl. From a very early

age he has been in the habit of taking her with him in his drives about the neighbourhood, "standing between her father's knees as he drove leisurely," so that she has drunk in knowledge of the country and of country folk at all her pores. An old-fashioned child, already living in a world of her own imagination, impressible to her finger-tips, and willing to give her views on any subject.

The first book that George Eliot read, so far as I have been able to ascertain, was a little volume published in 1822, entitled "The Linnet's Life," which she gave to me in the last year of her life, at Witley. It bears the following inscription, written some time before she gave it to me: —

"This little book is the first present I ever remember having received from my father. Let any one who thinks of me with some tenderness after I am dead, take care of this book for my sake. It made me very happy when I held it in my little hands, and read it over and over again; and thought the pictures beautiful, especially the one where the linnet is feeding her young."

It must, I think, have been very shortly after she received this present, that an old friend of the family, who was in the habit of coming as a visitor to Griff from time to time, used occasionally to bring a book in his hand for the little girl. I very well remember her expressing to me deep gratitude for this early ministration to her childish delights; and Mr. Burne Jones has been kind enough to tell me of a conversation with George Eliot about children's books, when she also referred to this old gentleman's kindness. They were agreeing in disparagement of some of the books that the rising generation take their pleasure in, and she recalled the dearth of child-literature in her own

home, and her passionate delight and total absorption in Æsop's Fables (given to her by the aforesaid old gentleman), the possession of which had opened new worlds to her imagination. Mr. Burne Jones particularly remembers how heartily she laughed in recalling her infantine enjoyment of the humour in the fable of Mercury and the Statue-seller. Having so few books at this time, she read them again and again, until she knew them by heart. One of them was a Joe Miller jest-book, with the stories from which she used greatly to astonish the family circle. But the beginning of her serious reading-days did not come till later. Meantime her talent for observation gained a glorious new field for employment in her first journey from home, which took place in 1826. Her father and mother took her with them on a little trip into Derbyshire and Staffordshire, where she saw Mr. Evans's relations, and they came back through Lichfield, sleeping at the "Swan."[1] They were away only a week, from the 18th to the 24th of May; but "what time is little" to an imaginative, observant child of seven on her first journey? About this time a deeply felt crisis occurred in her life, as her brother had a pony given to him, to which he became passionately attached. He developed an absorbing interest in riding, and cared less and less to play with his sister. The next important event happened in her eighth or ninth year, when she was sent to Miss Wallington's school at Nuneaton, with her sister. This was a much larger school than Miss Lathom's, — there being some thirty girls, boarders. The principal governess was Miss Lewis, who became then, and remained for many years after, Mary Ann

[1] See *post*, Journal, Aug. 25, 1859, — chap. ix.

Evans's most intimate friend and principal correspondent; and I am indebted to the letters addressed to her from 1836 to 1842 for most of the information concerning that period. Books now became a passion with the child: she read everything she could lay hands on, greatly troubling the soul of her mother by the consumption of candles as well as of eyesight in her bedroom. From a subsequent letter, it will be seen that she was "early supplied with works of fiction by those who kindly sought to gratify her appetite for reading."

It must have been about this time that the episode occurred in relation to "Waverley" which is mentioned by Miss Simcox in her article in the June, 1881, number of the "Nineteenth Century Review." It was quite new to me, and as it is very interesting, I give it in Miss Simcox's own words: "Somewhere about 1827 a friendly neighbour lent 'Waverley' to an elder sister of little Mary Ann Evans. It was returned before the child had read to the end, and in her distress at the loss of the fascinating volume, she began to write out the story as far as she had read it for herself, beginning naturally where the story begins with Waverley's adventures at Tully Veolan, and continuing until the surprised elders were moved to get her the book again." Miss Simcox has pointed out the reference to this in the motto of the 57th chapter of "Middlemarch": —

> "They numbered scarce eight summers when a name
> Rose on their souls and stirred such motions there
> As thrill the buds and shape their hidden frame
> At penetration of the quickening air:
> His name who told of loyal Evan Dhu,
> Of quaint Bradwardine, and Vich Ian Vor,
> Making the little world their childhood knew
> Large with a land of mountain, lake, and scaur,

And larger yet with wonder, love, belief
Toward Walter Scott, who living far away
Sent them this wealth of joy and noble grief.
The book and they must part, but day by day,
In lines that thwart like portly spiders ran
They wrote the tale, from Tully Veolan."

Miss Simcox also mentions that "Elia divided her childish allegiance with Scott, and she remembered feasting with singular pleasure upon an extract in some stray almanac from the essay in commemoration of 'Captain Jackson and his slender ration of Single Gloucester.' This is an extreme example of the general rule that a wise child's taste in literature is sounder than adults generally venture to believe."

We know too, from the "Mill on the Floss," that the "History of the Devil," by Daniel Defoe, was a favourite. The book is still religiously preserved at Griff, with its pictures just as Maggie looked at them. "The Pilgrim's Progress," also, and "Rasselas," had a large share of her affections.

At Miss Wallington's the growing girl soon distinguished herself by an easy mastery of the usual school learning of her years; and there, too, the religious side of her nature was developed to a remarkable degree. Miss Lewis was an ardent evangelical Churchwoman, and exerted a strong influence on her young pupil, whom she found very sympathetically inclined. But Mary Ann Evans did not associate freely with her schoolfellows, and her friendship with Miss Lewis was the only intimacy she indulged in.

On coming home for their holidays the sister and brother began, about this time, the habit of acting charades together before the Griff household and the aunts, who were greatly impressed with the cleverness of the performance; and the girl was

now recognised in the family circle as no ordinary child.

Another epoch presently succeeded on her removal to Miss Franklin's school at Coventry, in her thirteenth year. She was probably then very much what she has described her own Maggie at the age of thirteen: —

"A creature full of eager, passionate longings for all that was beautiful and glad; thirsty for all knowledge; with an ear straining after dreamy music that died away and would not come near to her; with a blind unconscious yearning for something that would link together the wonderful impressions of this mysterious life, and give her soul a sense of home in it. No wonder, when there is this contrast between the outward and the inward, that painful collisions come of it."

In "Our Times" of June, 1881, there is a paper by a lady whose mother was at school with Mary Ann Evans, which gives some interesting particulars of the Miss Franklins.

"They were daughters of a Baptist minister, who had preached for many years in Coventry, and who inhabited during his pastorate a house in the Chapel-yard almost exactly resembling that of Rufus Lyon in 'Felix Holt.' For this venerable gentleman, Miss Evans as a school-girl had a great admiration, and I, who can remember him well, can trace in Rufus Lyon himself many slight resemblances, such as the 'little legs,' and the habit of walking up and down when composing. Miss Rebecca Franklin was a lady of considerable intellectual power, and remarkable for her elegance in writing and conversation, as well as for her beautiful caligraphy. In her classes for English Composition Mary Ann Evans was, from her first

entering the school, far in advance of the rest; and while the themes of the other children were read, criticised, and corrected in class, hers were reserved for the private perusal and enjoyment of the teacher, who rarely found anything to correct. Her enthusiasm for music was already very strongly marked, and her music-master, a much-tried man, suffering from the irritability incident to his profession, reckoned on his hour with her as a refreshment to his wearied nerves, and soon had to confess that he had no more to teach her. In connection with this proficiency in music, my mother recalls her sensitiveness at that time as being painfully extreme. When there were visitors, Miss Evans, as the best performer in the school, was sometimes summoned to the parlour to play for their amusement, and though suffering agonies from shyness and reluctance, she obeyed with all readiness; but on being released, my mother has often known her to rush to her room and throw herself on the floor in an agony of tears. Her schoolfellows loved her as much as they could venture to love one whom they felt to be so immeasurably superior to themselves, and she had playful nicknames for most of them. My mother, who was delicate, and to whom she was very kind, was dubbed by her 'Miss Equanimity.' A source of great interest to the girls, and of envy to those who lived further from home, was the weekly cart which brought Miss Evans new-laid eggs and other delightful produce of her father's farm."

In talking about these early days, my wife impressed on my mind the debt she felt that she owed to the Miss Franklins for their excellent instruction, and she had also the very highest respect for their moral qualities. With her chameleon-

like nature, she soon adopted their religious views with intense eagerness and conviction, although she never formally joined the Baptists or any other communion than the Church of England. She at once, however, took a foremost place in the school, and became a leader of prayer-meetings amongst the girls. In addition to a sound English education, the Miss Franklins managed to procure for their pupils excellent masters for French, German, and music; so that, looking to the lights of those times, the means of obtaining knowledge were very much above the average for girls. Her teachers, on their side, were very proud of their exceptionally gifted scholar; and years afterwards, when Miss Evans came with her father to live in Coventry, they introduced her to one of their friends not only as a marvel of mental power, but also as a person "sure to get something up very soon in the way of clothing club or other charitable undertaking."

This year, 1832, was not only memorable for the change to a new and superior school, but it was also much more memorable to George Eliot for the riot which she saw at Nuneaton, on the occasion of the election for North Warwickshire, after the passing of the great Reform Bill, and which subsequently furnished her with the incidents for the riot in "Felix Holt." It was an event to lay hold on the imagination of an impressionable girl of thirteen, and it is thus described in the local newspaper of 29th December, 1832:—

"On Friday the 21st December, at Nuneaton, from the commencement of the poll till nearly half-past two, the Hemingites [1] occupied the poll;

[1] A Mr. Heming was the Radical candidate.

the numerous plumpers for Sir Eardley Wilmot and the adherents of Mr. Dugdale being constantly interrupted in their endeavours to go to the hustings to give an honest and conscientious vote. The magistrates were consequently applied to, and from the representations they received from all parties, they were at length induced to call in aid a military force. A detachment of the Scots Greys accordingly arrived; but it appearing that that gallant body was not sufficiently strong to put down the turbulent spirit of the mob, a reinforcement was considered by the constituted authorities as absolutely necessary. The tumult increasing, as the detachment of the Scots Greys were called in, the Riot Act was read from the windows of the Newdigate Arms; and we regret to add that both W. P. Inge, Esq., and Colonel Newdigate, in the discharge of their magisterial duties, received personal injuries.

"On Saturday the mob presented an appalling appearance, and but for the forbearance of the soldiery, numerous lives would have fallen a sacrifice. Several of the officers of the Scots Greys were materially hurt in their attempt to quell the riotous proceedings of the mob. During the day the sub-sheriffs at the different booths received several letters from the friends of Mr. Dugdale, stating that they were outside of the town, and anxious to vote for that gentleman, but were deterred from entering it from fear of personal violence. Two or three unlucky individuals, drawn from the files of the military on their approach to the poll, were cruelly beaten and stripped literally naked. We regret to add that one life has been sacrificed during the contest, and that sev-

eral misguided individuals have been seriously injured."

The term ending Christmas, 1835, was the last spent at Miss Franklin's. In the first letter of George Eliot's that I have been able to discover, dated 6th January, 1836, and addressed to Miss Lewis, who was at that time governess in the family of the Rev. L. Harper, Burton Latimer, Northamptonshire, she speaks of her mother having suffered a great increase of pain, and adds: —

"We dare not hope that there will be a permanent improvement. Our anxieties on my mother's account, though so great, have been since Thursday almost lost sight of in the more sudden and consequently more severe trial which we have been called on to endure in the alarming illness of my dear father. For four days we had no cessation of our anxiety; but I am thankful to say that he is now considered out of danger, though very much reduced by frequent bleeding and very powerful medicines."

In the summer of this year, 1836, the mother died, after a long painful illness, in which she was nursed with great devotion by her daughters. It was their first acquaintance with death; and to a highly wrought, sensitive girl of sixteen, such a loss seems an unendurable calamity. "To the old, sorrow is sorrow; to the young it is despair." Many references will be found in the subsequent correspondence to what she suffered at this time, all summed up in the old popular phrase, "We can have but one mother." In the following spring Christiana was married to Mr. Edward Clarke, a surgeon practising at Meriden in Warwickshire. One of Mr. Isaac Evans's most vivid recollections is that on the day of the marriage,

after the bride's departure, he and his younger sister had "a good cry" together over the break up of the old home-life, which of course could never be the same with the mother and the elder sister wanting.

Twenty-three years later we shall find George Eliot writing, on the death of this sister, that she "had a very special feeling for her, — stronger than any third person would think likely." The relation between the sisters was somewhat like that described as existing between Dorothea and Celia in "Middlemarch," — no intellectual affinity, but a strong family affection. In fact, my wife told me that although Celia was not in any sense a portrait of her sister, she "had Chrissey continually in mind" in delineating Celia's character. But we must be careful not to found too much on such *suggestions* of character in George Eliot's books; and this must particularly be borne in mind in the "Mill on the Floss." No doubt the early part of Maggie's portraiture is the best autobiographical representation we can have of George Eliot's own feelings in her childhood, and many of the incidents in the book are based on real experiences of family life, but so mixed with fictitious elements and situations that it would be absolutely misleading to trust to it as a true history. For instance, all that happened in real life between the brother and sister was, I believe, that as they grew up their characters, pursuits, and tastes diverged more and more widely. He took to his father's business, at which he worked steadily, and which absorbed most of his time and attention. He was also devoted to hunting, liked the ordinary pleasures of a young man in his circumstances, and was quite satisfied with the circle of

acquaintance in which he moved. After leaving school at Coventry he went to a private tutor's at Birmingham, where he imbibed strong High Church views. His sister had come back from the Miss Franklins' with ultra-evangelical tendencies, and their differences of opinion used to lead to a good deal of animated argument. Miss Evans, as she now was, could not rest satisfied with a mere profession of faith without trying to shape her own life — and it may be added, the lives around her — in accordance with her convictions. The pursuit of pleasure was a snare; dress was vanity; society was a danger.

"From what you know of her, you will not be surprised that she threw some exaggeration and wilfulness, some pride and impetuosity, even into her self-renunciation: her own life was still a drama for her, in which she demanded of herself that her part should be played with intensity. And so it came to pass that she often lost the spirit of humility by being excessive in the outward act; she often strove after too high a flight, and came down with her poor little half-fledged wings dabbled in the mud. . . . That is the path we all like when we set out on our abandonment of egoism, — the path of martyrdom and endurance, where the palm branches grow, rather than the steep highway of tolerance, just allowance, and self-blame, where there are no leafy honours to be gathered and worn." [1]

After Christiana's marriage the entire charge of the Griff establishment devolved on Mary Ann, who became a most exemplary housewife, learned thoroughly everything that had to be done, and, with her innate desire for perfection, was never

[1] "Mill on the Floss," chap. iii. book iv.

satisfied unless her department was administered in the very best manner that circumstances permitted. She spent a great deal of time in visiting the poor, organising clothing clubs, and other works of active charity. But over and above this, as will be seen from the following letters, she was always prosecuting an active intellectual life of her own. Mr. Brezzi, a well-known master of modern languages at Coventry, used to come over to Griff regularly to give her lessons in Italian and German. Mr. M'Ewen, also from Coventry, continued her lessons in music, and she got through a large amount of miscellaneous reading by herself. In the evenings she was always in the habit of playing to her father, who was very fond of music. But it requires no great effort of imagination to conceive that this life, though full of interests of its own, and the source from whence the future novelist drew the most powerful and the most touching of her creations, was, as a matter of fact, very monotonous, very difficult, very discouraging. It could scarcely be otherwise to a young girl, with a full passionate nature and hungry intellect, shut up in a farmhouse in the remote country. For there was no sympathetic human soul near with whom to exchange ideas on the intellectual and spiritual problems that were beginning to agitate her mind. "You may try, but you can never imagine what it is to have a man's force of genius in you, and yet to suffer the slavery of being a girl." [1] This is a point of view that must be distinctly recognised by any one attempting to follow the development of George Eliot's character, and it will always be corrected by the other point of view which she has made

[1] "Daniel Deronda."

so prominent in all her own writing, — the soothing, strengthening, sacred influences of the home life, the home loves, the home duties. Circumstances in later life separated her from her kindred, but among her last letters it will be seen that she wrote to her brother in May, 1880, that "our long silence has never broken the affection for you which began when we were little ones."[1] — and she expresses her satisfaction in the growing prosperity of himself and all his family. It was a real gratification to her to hear from some Coventry friends that her nephew, the Rev. Frederic Evans, the present Rector of Bedworth, was well spoken of as a preacher in the old familiar places, and in our last summer at Witley we often spoke of a visit to Warwickshire, that she might renew the sweet memories of her child-days. No doubt, the very monotony of her life at Griff, and the narrow field it presented for observation of society, added immeasurably to the intensity of a naturally keen mental vision, concentrating into a focus what might perhaps have become dissipated in more liberal surroundings. And though the field of observation was narrow in one sense, it included very various grades of society. Such fine places as Arbury, and Packington, the seat of Lord Aylesford, where she was being constantly driven by her father, affected the imagination and accentuated the social differences, — differences which had a profound significance for such a sensitive and such an intellectually commanding character, and which left their mark on it.

"No one who has not a strong natural prompting and susceptibility towards such things [the signs and luxuries of ladyhood], and has, at the

[1] See chap. xix.

same time, suffered from the presence of opposite conditions, can understand how powerfully those minor accidents of rank which please the fastidious sense can preoccupy the imagination." [1]

The tone of her mind will be seen from the letters written during the following years; and I remember once, after we were married, when I was urging her to write her autobiography, she said, half sighing, half smiling: "The only thing I should care much to dwell on would be the absolute despair I suffered from of ever being able to achieve anything. No one could ever have felt greater despair, and a knowledge of this might be a help to some other struggler," — adding with a smile, "but, on the other hand, it might only lead to an increase of bad writing."

[1] "Felix Holt," chap. xxxviii.

## SUMMARY OF INTRODUCTORY SKETCH

NOVEMBER 22, 1819, TO END OF 1837

Birth at Arbury Farm — Baptism — Character of father — His first marriage and children — Second marriage and children — Removal to Griff — Events at time of birth — Character of country about Griff — Coach communication — Father's position — Anecdotes of father — Character of mother — Mother's family and delicacy — Dame's school — Companionship with brother — Miss Lathom's school at Attleboro — Suffers from fear — Father's pet — Drives with him — First books read — First journey to Staffordshire — Miss Wallington's school at Nuneaton — Miss Lewis, governess — Books read — Religious impressions — Charade acting — Miss Franklin's school at Coventry — Riot at Nuneaton — First letter to Miss Lewis — Mother's illness — Mother's death — Sister Christiana married to Mr. Clarke — Relations with brother — Housekeeper at Griff — Life and studies there.

# CHAPTER I

IN the foregoing introductory sketch, I have endeavoured to present the influences to which George Eliot was subjected in her youth, and the environment in which she grew up; I am now able to begin the fulfilment of the promise on the title-page, that the life will be related in her own letters, — or rather in extracts from her own letters, for no single letter is printed entire from the beginning to the end. I have not succeeded in obtaining any between 6th January, 1836, and 18th August, 1838; but from the latter date the correspondence becomes regular, and I have arranged it as a continuous narrative, with the names of the persons to whom the letters are addressed in the margin. The slight thread of narrative or explanation which I have written to elucidate the letters, where necessary, will hereafter occupy an inside margin, so that the reader will see at a glance what is narrative and what is correspondence, and will be troubled as little as possible with marks of quotation or changes of type.

*The following opening letter of the series to Miss Lewis describes a first visit to London with her brother: —*

Let me tell you, though, that I was not at all delighted with the stir of the great Babel, and the less so, probably, owing to the circumstances attending my visit thither. Isaac and I went alone (that seems rather Irish), and stayed only a week, every day of which we worked hard at seeing sights. I

Letter to Miss Lewis, 18th Aug. 1838.

think Greenwich Hospital interested me more than anything else.

*Mr. Isaac Evans himself tells me that what he remembers chiefly impressed her was the first hearing the great bell of St. Paul's. It affected her deeply. At that time she was so much under the influence of religious and ascetic ideas that she would not go to any of the theatres with her brother, but spent all her evenings alone reading. A characteristic reminiscence is that the chief thing she wanted to buy was Josephus's "History of the Jews;" and at the same bookshop where her brother got her this, he bought for himself a pair of hunting sketches. In the same letter, alluding to the marriage of one of her friends, she says: —*

For my part, when I hear of the marrying and giving in marriage that is constantly being transacted, I can only sigh for those who are multiplying earthly ties which, though powerful enough to detach their hearts and thoughts from heaven, are so brittle as to be liable to be snapped asunder at every breeze. You will think that I need nothing but a tub for my habitation to make me a perfect female Diogenes; and I plead guilty to occasional misanthropical thoughts, but not to the indulgence of them. Still I must believe that those are happiest who are not fermenting themselves by engaging in projects for earthly bliss, who are considering this life merely a pilgrimage, a scene calling for diligence and watchfulness, not for repose and amusement. I do not deny that there may be many who can partake with a high degree of zest of all the lawful enjoyments the world can offer, and yet live in near communion with their God, — who can warmly love the creature, and yet be careful that the Creator maintains His supremacy in their hearts; but I confess that

in my short experience and narrow sphere of action I have never been able to attain to this. I find, as Dr. Johnson said respecting his wine, total abstinence much easier than moderation. I do not wonder you are pleased with Pascal;[1] his thoughts may be returned to the palate again and again with increasing rather than diminished relish. I have highly enjoyed Hannah More's letters: the contemplation of so blessed a character as hers is very salutary. "That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises," is a valuable admonition. I was once told that there was nothing out of myself to prevent my becoming as eminently holy as St. Paul; and though I think that is too sweeping an assertion, yet it is very certain we are generally too low in our aims, more anxious for safety than sanctity, for place than purity, forgetting that each involves the other, and that, as Doddridge tells us, to rest satisfied with any attainments in religion is a fearful proof that we are ignorant of the very first principles of it. Oh that we could live only for eternity! that we could realise its nearness! I know you do not love quotations, so I will not give you one; but if you do not distinctly remember it, do turn to the passage in Young's "Infidel Reclaimed," beginning, "O vain, vain, vain all else eternity," and do love the lines for my sake.

I really feel for you, sacrificing, as you are, your own tastes and comforts for the pleasure of others, and that in a manner the most trying to rebellious flesh and blood; for I verily believe that in most cases it requires more of a martyr's spirit to endure, with patience and cheerfulness, daily cross-

[1] Given to her as a school prize when she was fourteen: see chap. xviii.

ings and interruptions of our petty desires and pursuits, and to rejoice in them if they can be made to conduce to God's glory and our own sanctification, than even to lay down our lives for the truth.

I can hardly repress a sort of indignation towards second causes. That your time and energies should be expended in ministering to the petty interests of those far beneath you in all that is really elevating, is about as *bienséant* as that I should set fire to a goodly volume to light a match by! I have had a very unsettled life lately, — Michaelmas with its onerous duties and anxieties, much company (for us) and little reading, so that I am ill prepared for corresponding with profit or pleasure. I am generally in the same predicament with books as a glutton with his feast, hurrying through one course that I may be in time for the next, and so not relishing or digesting either; not a very elegant illustration, but the best my organs of ideality and comparison will furnish just now.

Letter to Miss Lewis, 6th Nov. 1838.

I have just begun the life of Wilberforce, and I am expecting a rich treat from it. There is a similarity, if I may compare myself with such a man, between his temptations, or rather *besetments*, and my own, that makes his experience very interesting to me. Oh that I might be made as useful in my lowly and obscure station as he was in the exalted one assigned to him! I feel myself to be a mere cumberer of the ground. May the Lord give me such an insight into what is truly good, that I may not rest contented with making Christianity a mere addendum to my pursuits, or with tacking it as a fringe to my garments! May I seek to be sanctified wholly! My

nineteenth birthday will soon be here (the 22d), — an awakening signal. My mind has been much clogged lately by languor of body, to which I am prone to give way, and for the removal of which I shall feel thankful.

We have had an oratorio at Coventry lately, Braham, Phillips, Mrs. Knyvett, and Mrs. Shaw, — the last, I think, I shall attend. I am not fitted to decide on the question of the propriety or lawfulness of such exhibitions of talent and so forth, because I have no soul for music. "Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth." I am a tasteless person, but it would not cost me any regrets if the only music heard in our land were that of strict worship, nor can I think a pleasure that involves the devotion of all the time and powers of an immortal being to the acquirement of an expertness in so useless (at least in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred) an accomplishment, can be quite pure or elevating in its tendency.

*The above remarks on oratorio are the more surprising, because two years later, when Miss Evans went to the Birmingham festival in September, 1840, previous to her brother's marriage, she was affected to an extraordinary degree, so much so that Mrs. Isaac Evans — then Miss Rawlins — told me that the attention of people sitting near was attracted by her hysterical sobbing. And in all her later life music was one of the chiefest delights to her, and especially oratorio.*

"Not that her enjoyment of music was of the kind that indicates a great specific talent; it was rather that her sensibility to the supreme excitement of music was only one form of that passionate sensibility which belonged to her whole nature, and made her faults and virtues all merge in each other,

— made her affections sometimes an impatient demand, but also prevented her vanity from taking the form of mere feminine coquetry and device, and gave it the poetry of ambition." [1]

*The next two letters, dated from Griff, — February 6th and March 5th, 1839, — are addressed to Mrs. Samuel Evans, a Methodist preacher, the wife of a younger brother of Mr. Robert Evans. They are the more interesting from the fact, which will appear later, that an anecdote related by this aunt during her visit to Griff in 1839 was the germ of "Adam Bede." To what extent this Elizabeth Evans resembled the ideal character of Dinah Morris will also be seen in its place in the history of "Adam Bede."*

Letter to Mrs. Samuel Evans, 6th Feb. 1839.

I am so unwilling to believe that you can forget a promise, or to entertain fears respecting your health, that I persuade myself I must have mistaken the terms of the agreement between us, and that I ought to have sent you a letter before I considered myself entitled to one from Wirksworth. However this may be, I feel so anxious to hear of your well-being in every way, that I can no longer rest satisfied without using my only means of obtaining tidings of you. My dear father is not at home to-night, or I should probably have a message of remembrance to give you from him in addition to the good news that he is as well as he has been for the last two years, and even, I think, better, except that he feels more fatigue after exertion of mind or body than formerly. If you are able to fill a sheet, I am sure both uncle and you would in doing so be complying with the precept, "Lift up the hands that hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees." I need not tell you that this is a dry and

[1] "Mill on the Floss," chap. *ii.* book vi.

thirsty land, and I shall be as grateful to you for a draught from your fresh spring as the traveller in the Eastern desert is to the unknown hand that digs a well for him. "Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel," seems to be my character, instead of that regular progress from strength to strength that marks, even in this world of mistakes, the people that shall in the heavenly Zion stand before God. I shall not only suffer, but be delighted to receive, the word of exhortation, and I beg you not to withhold it. If I did not know how little you need human help, I should regret that my ignorance and want of deep feeling in spiritual things prevent me from suggesting profitable or refreshing thoughts; but I daresay I took care to tell you that my desire for correspondence with you was quite one of self-interest.

I am thankful to tell you that my dear friends here are all well. I have a faint hope that the pleasure and profit I have felt in your society may be repeated in the summer: there is no place I would rather visit than Wirksworth, or the inhabitants of which have a stronger hold on my affections.

*In the next letter the touch about Mrs. Fletcher's life is characteristic.*

Letter to Mrs. Samuel Evans, 5th March, 1839.

My dear father is just now so plunged in business, and that of a fatiguing kind, that I should put your confidence in my love and gratitude to an unreasonably severe trial if I waited until he had leisure to unite with me in filling a sheet. You were very kind to remember my wish to see Mrs. Fletcher's life: I only desire such a spiritual digestion as has enabled *you* to derive so much benefit from its pe-

rusal. I am truly glad to hear that you are less embarrassed with respect to your congregation, &c., than you were when we saw you. I must protest against your making apologies for speaking of yourself, for nothing that relates to you can be uninteresting to me.

The unprofitableness you lament in yourself, during your visit to us, had its true cause, not in your lukewarmness, but in the little improvement I sought to derive from your society, and in my lack of humility and Christian simplicity, that makes me willing to obtain credit for greater knowledge and deeper feeling than I really possess. Instead of putting my light under a bushel, I am in danger of ostentatiously displaying a false one. You have much too high an opinion, my dear aunt, of my spiritual condition, and of my personal and circumstantial advantages. My soul seems for weeks together completely benumbed; and when I am aroused from this torpid state, the intervals of activity are comparatively short. I am ever finding excuses for this in the deprivation of outward excitement and the small scope I have for the application of my principles, instead of feeling self-abasement under the consciousness that I abuse precious hours of retirement which would be eagerly employed in spiritual exercises by many a devoted servant of God who is struggling with worldly cares and occupations. I feel that my besetting sin is the one of all others most destroying, as it is the fruitful parent of them all, — ambition, a desire insatiable for the esteem of my fellow-creatures. This seems the centre whence all my actions proceed. But you will perhaps remember, my dear aunt, that I do not attach much value to a disclosure of religious feelings,

owing probably to the dominant corruption I have just been speaking of, which "turns the milk of my good purpose all to curd."

*On 16th March, 1839, in a letter to Miss Lewis, there is a reference to good spirits, which is of the rarest occurrence all through the correspondence: —*

Letter to Miss Lewis, 16th March, 1839.

I am this morning hardly myself, owing to the insuppressible rising of my animal spirits on a deliverance from sick headache; —

*and then the letter continues as to the expediency of reading works of fiction, in answer to a question Miss Lewis had asked: —*

I put out of the question all persons of perceptions so quick, memories so eclectic and retentive, and minds so comprehensive, that nothing less than omnivorous reading, as Southey calls it, can satisfy their intellectual man; for (if I may parody the words of Scripture without profaneness) they will gather to themselves all facts, and heap unto themselves all ideas. For such persons we cannot legislate. Again, I would put out of the question standard works, whose contents are matter of constant reference, and the names of whose heroes and heroines briefly, and therefore conveniently, describe characters and ideas: such are "Don Quixote," Butler's "Hudibras," "Robinson Crusoe," "Gil Blas," Byron's Poetical Romances, Southey's ditto, &c. Such, too, are Walter Scott's novels and poems. Such allusions as "He is a perfect Dominie Sampson," "He is as industrious in finding out antiquities, and about as successful, as Jonathan Oldbuck," are likely to become so common in books and conversation, that, *always*

*providing* our leisure is not circumscribed by duty within narrow bounds, we should, I think, qualify ourselves to understand. Shakspeare has a higher claim than this on our attention; but we have need of as nice a power of distillation as the bee, to suck nothing but honey from his pages. However, as in life we must be exposed to malign influences from intercourse with others if we would reap the advantages designed for us by making us social beings, so in books. Having cleared our way of what would otherwise have encumbered us, I would ask why is one engaged in the instruction of youth to read, as a purely conscientious and self-denying performance of duty, works whose value to others is allowed to be doubtful? I can only imagine two shadows of reasons. Either that she may be able experimentally to decide on their desirableness for her pupils, or else that there is a certain power exerted by them on the mind that would render her a more efficient "tutress" by their perusal. I would not depreciate the disinterestedness of those who will make trial of the effect on themselves of a cup suspected poisonous, that they may deter another from risking life; but it appears to me a work of supererogation, since there are enough witnesses to its baneful effect on themselves already to put an end to all strife in the matter. The Scriptural declaration, "As face answereth to face in a glass, so the heart of man to man," will exonerate me from the charge of uncharitableness, or too high an estimation of myself, if I venture to believe that the same causes which exist in my own breast to render novels and romances pernicious, have their counterpart in that of every fellow-creature. I am, I confess, not an impartial member of a jury

in this case; for I owe the culprits a grudge for injuries inflicted on myself. When I was quite a little child, I could not be satisfied with the things around me: I was constantly living in a world of my own creation, and was quite contented to have no companions, that I might be left to my own musings, and imagine scenes in which I was chief actress. Conceive what a character novels would give to these Utopias. I was early supplied with them by those who kindly sought to gratify my appetite for reading, and of course I made use of the materials they supplied for building my castles in the air. But it may be said, "No one ever dreamed of recommending children to read them: all this does not apply to persons come to years of discretion, whose judgments are in some degree matured." I answer that men and women are but children of a larger growth: they are still imitative beings. We cannot (at least those who ever read to any purpose at all), — we cannot, I say, help being modified by the ideas that pass through our minds. We hardly wish to lay claim to such elasticity as retains no impress. We are active beings too. We are each one of the *dramatis personæ* in some play on the stage of Life; hence our actions have their share in the effects of our reading. As to the discipline our minds receive from the perusal of fictions, I can conceive none that is beneficial but may be attained by that of history. It is the merit of fictions to come within the orbit of probability: if unnatural, they would no longer please. If it be said the mind must have relaxation, "Truth is strange, — stranger than fiction." When a person has exhausted the wonders of truth, there is no other resort than fiction; till then, I cannot

imagine how the adventures of some phantom, conjured up by fancy, can be more entertaining than the transactions of real specimens of human nature from which we may safely draw inferences. I daresay Mr. James's "Huguenot" would be recommended as giving an idea of the times of which he writes; but as well may one be recommended to look at landscapes for an idea of English scenery. The real secret of the relaxation talked of is one that would not generally be avowed; but an appetite that wants seasoning of a certain kind cannot be indicative of health. Religious novels are more hateful to me than merely worldly ones: they are a sort of centaur or mermaid, and, like other monsters that we do not know how to class, should be destroyed for the public good as soon as born. The weapons of the Christian warfare were never sharpened at the forge of romance. Domestic fictions, as they come more within the range of imitation, seem more dangerous. For my part, I am ready to sit down and weep at the impossibility of my understanding or barely knowing a fraction of the sum of objects that present themselves for our contemplation in books and in life. Have I, then, any time to spend on things that never existed?

Letter to Miss Lewis, 20th May, 1839.

You allude to the religious, or rather irreligious, contentions that form so prominent a feature in the aspect of public affairs, — a subject, you will perhaps be surprised to hear me say, full of interest to me, and on which I am unable to shape an opinion for the satisfaction of my mind. I think no one feels more difficulty in coming to a decision on controverted matters than myself. I do not mean that I have not preferences; but, however congruous a theory

may be with my notions, I cannot find that comfortable repose that others appear to possess after having made their election of a class of sentiments. The other day Montaigne's motto came to my mind (it is mentioned by Pascal) as an appropriate one for me, — "Que sais-je?" — beneath a pair of balances, though, by the by, it is an ambiguous one, and may be taken in a sense that I desire to reprobate, as well as in a Scriptural one to which I do not refer. I use it in a limited sense as a representation of my oscillating judgment. On no subject do I veer to all points of the compass more frequently than on the nature of the visible Church. I am powerfully attracted in a certain direction, but when I am about to settle there, counter-assertions shake me from my position. I cannot enter into details, but when we are together I will tell you all my difficulties, — that is, if you will be kind enough to listen. I have been reading the new prize essay on "Schism" by Professor Hoppus and Milner's "Church History" since I last wrote to you: the former ably expresses the tenets of those who deny that any form of Church government is so clearly dictated in Scripture as to possess a divine right, and, consequently, to be binding on Christians; the latter, you know, exhibits the views of a moderate Evangelical Episcopalian on the inferences to be drawn from ecclesiastical remains. He equally repudiates the loud assertion of a *jus divinum*, to the exclusion of all separatists from the visible Church, though he calmly maintains the superiority of the evidence in favour of Episcopacy, of a moderate kind both in power and extent of diocese, as well as the benefit of a national establishment. I have been skimming the "Portrait of an English Churchman"

by the Rev. W. Gresley: this contains an outline of the system of those who exclaim of the Anglican Church as the Jews did of their sacred building (that they do it in as reprehensible a spirit I will not be the judge), "the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord" is exclusively theirs; while the authors of the Oxford Tracts go a step farther, and evince by their compliments to Rome, as a dear though erring sister, and their attempts to give a Romish colour to our ordinance, with a very confused and unscriptural statement of the great doctrine of justification, a disposition rather to fraternise with the members of a Church carrying on her brow the prophetical epithets applied by St. John to the Scarlet beast, the mystery of Iniquity, than with pious Nonconformists. It is true they disclaim all this, and that their opinions are seconded by the extensive learning, the laborious zeal, and the deep devotion of those who propagate them; but a reference to facts will convince us that such has generally been the character of heretical teachers. Satan is too crafty to commit his cause into the hands of those who have nothing to recommend them to approbation. According to their dogmas, the Scotch Church and the foreign Protestant Churches, as well as the non-Episcopalians of our own land, are wanting in the essentials of existence as part of the Church.

*In the next letter there is the first allusion to authorship, but, from the wording of the sentence, the poem referred to has evidently not been a first attempt.*

I send you some doggerel lines, the crude fruit of a lonely walk last evening, when the words of one of our martyrs occurred to me. You must be

acquainted with the idiosyncrasy of my authorship, which is, that my effusions, once committed to paper, are like the laws of the Medes and Persians, that alter not.

Letter to Miss Lewis, 17th July, 1839.

"'*Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle.*'
2 Peter i. 14.

"As o'er the fields by evening's light I stray,
I hear a still small whisper, — Come away;
Thou must to this bright, lovely world soon say
Farewell!

"The mandate I'd obey, my lamp prepare,
Gird up my garments, give my soul to pray'r,
And say to earth, and all that breathe earth's air,
Farewell!

"Thou sun, to whose parental beam I owe
All that has gladden'd me while here below,
Moon, stars, and covenant-confirming bow,
Farewell!

"Ye verdant meads, fair blossoms, stately trees,
Sweet song of birds and soothing hum of bees,
Refreshing odours wafted on the breeze,
Farewell!

"Ye patient servants of creation's Lord,
Whose mighty strength is govern'd by His word,
Who raiment, food, and help in toil afford,
Farewell!

"Books that have been to me as chests of gold,
Which, miserlike, I secretly have told,
And for them love, health, friendship, peace have sold,
Farewell!

"Blest volume! whose clear truth-writ page once known,
Fades not before heaven's sunshine or hell's moan,
To thee I say not, of earth's gifts alone,
Farewell!

"There shall my new-born senses find new joy,
New sounds, new sights my eyes and ears employ,
Nor fear that word that here brings sad alloy,
Farewell!"

*I had a dim recollection that my wife had told me that this poem had been printed somewhere. After a long search, I found it in the "Christian Observer" for Janu-*

*ary, 1840. The version there published has the two following additional verses, and is signed "M. A. E."*

"Ye feebler, freer tribes that people air,
Ye gaudy insects, making buds your lair,
Ye that in water shine and frolic there,
Farewell!

"Dear kindred whom the Lord to me has given,
Must the strong tie that binds us now be riven?
No! say I — only till we meet in heaven,
Farewell!"

*The editor of the "Christian Observer" has added this note: "We do not often add a note to a poem: but if St. John found no temple in the New Jerusalem, neither will there be any need of a Bible; for we shall not then see through a glass darkly, — through the veil of Sacraments of the written Word, — but face to face. The Bible is God's gift, but not for heaven's use. Still on the very verge of heaven we may cling to it, after we have bid farewell to everything earthly; and this perhaps is what M. A. E. means."*

*In the following letter we already see the tendency to draw illustrations from science: —*

Letter to Miss Lewis, 4th Sept. 1839.

I have lately led so unsettled a life, and have been so desultory in my employments, that my mind, never of the most highly organised genus, is more than usually chaotic; or rather it is like a stratum of conglomerated fragments, that shows here a jaw and rib of some ponderous quadruped, there a delicate alto-relievo of some fern-like plant, tiny shells, and mysterious nondescripts encrusted and united with some unvaried and uninteresting but useful stone. My mind presents just such an assemblage of disjointed specimens of history, ancient and modern; scraps of poetry picked up from Shakspeare, Cowper, Wordsworth, and Milton; newspaper topics; morsels of Addison and Bacon,

Latin verbs, geometry, entomology, and chemistry; Reviews and metaphysics, — all arrested and petrified and smothered by the fast-thickening every-day accession of actual events, relative anxieties, and household cares and vexations. How deplorably and unaccountably evanescent are our frames of mind, as various as the forms and hues of the summer clouds! A single word is sometimes enough to give an entirely new mould to our thoughts, — at least I find myself so constituted; and therefore to me it is pre-eminently important to be anchored within the veil, so that outward things may be unable to send me adrift. Write to me as soon as you can. Remember Michaelmas is coming, and I shall be engaged in matters so nauseating to me that it will be a charity to console me; to reprove and advise me no less.

I have emerged from the slough of domestic troubles, or rather, to speak quite clearly, "malheurs de cuisine," and am beginning to take a deep breath in my own element, though with a mortifying consciousness that my faculties have become superlatively obtuse during my banishment from it. I have been so self-indulgent as to possess myself of Wordsworth at full length, and I thoroughly like much of the contents of the first three vols., which I fancy are only the low vestibule of the three remaining ones. I never before met with so many of my own feelings expressed just as I could like them. The distress of the lower classes in our neighbourhood is daily increasing from the scarcity of employment for weavers, and I seem sadly to have handcuffed myself by unnecessary expenditure. To-day is my 20th birthday.

Letter to Miss Lewis, 22d Nov. 1839.

*This allusion to Wordsworth is interesting, as it entirely expresses the feeling she had to him up to the day of her death. One of the very last books we read together at Cheyne Walk was Mr. Frederick Myers's "Wordsworth" in the "English Men of Letters," which she heartily enjoyed.*

Letter to Miss Lewis, 23d March, 1840.

I have just received my second lesson in German.

Letter to Miss Lewis, 2d May, 1840. Friday evening.

I know you will be glad to think of me as thoroughly employed, as indeed I am to an extent that makes me fear I shall not be able to accomplish everything well. I have engaged, if possible, to complete the Chart,[1] the plan of which I sketched out last year, by November next, and I am encouraged to believe that it will answer my purpose to print it. The profits arising from its sale, if any, will go partly to Attleboro Church, and partly to a favourite object of my own. Mrs. Newdigate is very anxious that I should do this, and she permits me to visit her library when I please, in search of any books that may assist me. Will you ask Mr. Craig what he considers the best authority for the date of the apostolical writings? I should like to carry the Chart down to the Reformation, if my time and resources will enable me to do so. We are going to have a clothing club, the arrangement and starting of which are left to me. I am ashamed to run the risk of troubling you, but I should be very grateful if you could send me an abstract of the rules by which yours is regulated.

Our house is now, and will be for the next two months, miserably noisy and disorderly with the musical operations of masons, carpenters, and

[1] Of ecclesiastical history.

painters. You know how abhorrent all this is to my tastes and feelings, taking all the spice out of my favourite little epithet, "this working-day world": I can no longer use it figuratively. How impressive must the gradual rise of Solomon's Temple have been! each prepared mass of virgin marble laid in reverential silence. I fancy Heber has compared it to the growth of a palm. Your nice miniature chart, which I shall carefully treasure up, has quite satisfied me that Dr. Pearson at least has not realised my conceptions, though it has left me still dubious as to my own power of doing so. I will just (if you can bear to hear more of the matter) give you an idea of the plan, which may have partly faded from your memory. The series of perpendicular columns will successively contain the Roman emperors with their dates, the political and religious state of the Jews, the Bishops, remarkable men and events in the several Churches, a column being devoted to each of the chief ones, the aspect of heathenism and Judaism towards Christianity, the chronology of the Apostolical and Patristical writings, schisms and heresies, General Councils, eras of corruption (under which head the remarks would be general), and I thought possibly an application of the apocalyptic prophecies, which would merely require a few figures and not take up room. I think there must be a break in the Chart, after the establishment of Christianity as the religion of the empire, and I have come to a determination not to carry it beyond the first acknowledgment of the supremacy of the Pope by Phocas in 606, when Mohammedanism became a besom of destruction in the hand of the Lord, and completely altered the aspect of ecclesiastical his-

Letter to Miss Lewis, 21st May, 1840.

tory. So much for this at present airy project, about which I hope never to tease you more. Mr. Harper[1] lent me a little time ago a work by the Rev. W. Gresley, begging me to read it, as he thought it was calculated to make me a proselyte to the opinions it advocates. I had skimmed the book before ("Portrait of an English Churchman"), but I read it attentively a second time, and was pleased with the spirit of piety that breathes throughout. His last work is one in a similar style ("The English Citizen"), which I have cursorily read; and as they are both likely to be seen by you, I want to know your opinion of them. Mine is this: that they are sure to have a powerful influence on the minds of small readers and shallow thinkers, as from the simplicity and clearness with which the author, by his *beau idéal* characters, enunciates his sentiments, they furnish a magazine of easily wielded weapons for *morning-calling* and *evening-party* controversialists, as well as that really honest minds will be inclined to think they have found a resting-place amid the footballing of religious parties. But it appears to me that there is unfairness in arbitrarily selecting a train of circumstances and a set of characters as a development of a class of opinions. In this way we might make atheism appear wonderfully calculated to promote social happiness. I remember, as I daresay you do, a very amiable atheist depicted by Bulwer in "Devereux;" and for some time after the perusal of that book, which I read seven or eight years ago,[2] I was considerably shaken by the impression that religion was not a requisite to moral excellence.

[1] The Squire of Coton.

[2] When she would be thirteen years old.

Have you not alternating seasons of mental stagnation and activity? — just such as the political economists say there must be in a nation's pecuniary condition, — all one's precious specie, time, going out to procure a stock of commodities, while one's own manufactures are too paltry to be worth vending. I am just in that condition, — partly, I think, owing to my not having met with any steel to sharpen my edge against for the last three weeks. I am going to read a volume of the Oxford Tracts and the "Lyra Apostolica": the former I almost shrink from the labour of conning, but the other I confess I am attracted towards by some highly poetical extracts that I have picked up in various quarters. I have just bought Mr. Keble's "Christian Year," a volume of sweet poetry that perhaps you know. The fields of poesy look more lovely than ever, now I have hedged myself in the geometrical regions of fact, where I can do nothing but draw parallels and measure differences in a double sense.

[1] I will only hint that there seems a probability of my being an unoccupied damsel, of my being severed from all the ties that have hitherto given my existence the semblance of a usefulness beyond that of making up the requisite quantum of animal matter in the universe. A second important intimation respecting my worthy self is one that, I confess, I impart without one sigh, though perhaps you will think my callousness discreditable. It is that Seeley & Burnside have just published a Chart of Ecclesiastical History, doubtless giving to my airy vision a local habitation and a

Letter to Miss Lewis, 26th May, 1840.

[1] Written probably in view of her brother's marriage.

name. I console all my little regrets by thinking that what is thus evidenced to be a desideratum has been executed much better than if left to my slow fingers and slower head. I fear I am laboriously doing nothing, for I am beguiled by the fascination that the study of languages has for my capricious mind. I could e'en give myself up to making discoveries in the world of words.

May I trouble you to procure for me an Italian book recommended by Mr. Brezzi, Silvio Pellico's "Le mie Prigioni" — if not, "Storia d'Italia"? If they are cheap, I should like both.

Letter to Miss Lewis in London, Whit-Wednesday, June, 1840.

I shall have, I hope, a little trip with my father next week into Derbyshire, and this "lark" will probably be beneficial to me; so that do not imagine I am inviting you to come and hear moaning, when you need all attainable relaxation.

Letter to Miss Lewis, 23d June, 1840.

Your letter greeted me last night on my arrival from Staffordshire. The prospectus of Mr. Henslow's work is as marvellous to my ignorant conceptions as the prophecies of the wonders of the steam-engine would have been to some British worthy in the days of Caractacus. I can only gape as he would probably have done. I hope Mr. H. has not imitated certain show-keepers, who give so exaggerated a representation of their giantess, on the outside, that the spectators have disappointment for their cash within.

If I do not see you, how shall I send your "Don Quixote," which I hope soon to finish? I have been sadly interrupted by other books that have taken its scanty allowance of time, or I should have made better haste with it. Will you try to get me Spenser's "Faery Queen"? the cheapest

edition, with a glossary, which is quite indispensable, together with a clear and correct type. I have had some treats on my little excursion, not the least of which was the gazing on some — albeit the smallest — of the "everlasting hills," and on those noblest children of the earth — fine healthy trees — as independent in their beauty as virtue: set them where you will, they adorn and need not adornment. Father indulged me with a sight of Ashborne Church, the finest mere parish church in the kingdom, — in the *interior;* of Alton Gardens, where I saw actually what I have often seen mentally, — the bread-fruit tree, the fan-palm, and the papyrus; and last, of Lichfield Cathedral, where, besides the exquisite architectural beauties both external and internal, I saw Chantrey's famous monument of the Sleeping Children. There is a tasteless monument to the learned and brilliant female pedant of Lichfield, Miss Seward, with a poor epitaph by Sir Walter Scott. In the town we saw a large monument erected to Johnson's memory, showing his Titanic body, in a sitting posture, on the summit of a pedestal which is ornamented with bas-reliefs of three passages in his life: his penance in Uttoxeter Market, his chairing on the shoulders of his schoolmates, and his listening to the preaching of Sacheverel. The statue is opposite to the house in which Johnson was born, — altogether inferior to that in St. Paul's, which shook me almost as much as a real glance from the literary monarch. I am ashamed to send you so many ill-clothed nothings. My excuse shall be a state of head that calls for four leeches before I can attack Mrs. Somerville's "Connection of the Physical Sciences."

Letter to Miss Lewis, July, Monday morning, 1840.

I write with a very tremulous hand, as you will perceive: both this, and many other defects in my letter, are attributable to a very mighty cause, — no other than the boiling of currant jelly! I have had much of this kind of occupation lately, and I grieve to say I have not gone through it so cheerfully as the character of a Christian who professes to do *all*, even the most trifling, duty as the Lord demands. My mind is consequently run all wild, and bears nothing but *dog-roses*. I am truly obliged to you for getting me Spenser. How shall I send to you "Don Quixote," which I have quite finished?

Letter to Miss Lewis, 8th July, 1840.

I believe it is decided that father and I should leave Griff and take up our residence somewhere in the neighbourhood of Coventry, if we can obtain a suitable house; and this is at present a matter of anxiety. So you see I am likely still to have a home where I can independently welcome you. I am really so plunged in an abyss of books, preserves, and sundry *important trivialities*, that I must send you this bare proof that I have not cast the remembrance of you to a dusty corner of my heart. Ever believe that "my heart is as thy heart," that you may rely on me as a second self, and that I shall, with my usual selfishness, lose no opportunity of gratifying my duplicate.

Letter to Miss Lewis, 12th Aug. 1840.

The Epistle to the Colossians is pre-eminently rich in the colouring with which it portrays the divine fulness contained in the Saviour, contrasted with the beggarly elements that a spirit of self-righteousness would, in some way, mingle with the light of life, the filthy rags it would tack round the "fine raiment"

of His righteousness. I have been reading it in connection with a train of thought suggested by the reading of " Ancient Christianity and the Oxford Tracts," by Isaac Taylor, one of the most eloquent, acute, and pious of writers. Five numbers only have yet appeared. Have you seen them? If not, I should like to send you an abstract of his argument. I have gulped it (pardon my coarseness) in a most reptile-like fashion. I must *chew* it thoroughly to facilitate its assimilation with my mental frame. When your pupils can relish Church history, I venture to recommend the Chart lately published by Seeley & Burnside, — far superior in conception to mine, as being more compendious, yet answering the purpose of presenting epochs as nuclei round which less important events instinctively cluster.

*Mrs. John Cash of Coventry, who was then Miss Mary Sibree, daughter of a Nonconformist minister there, and whose acquaintance Miss Evans made a year or two later in Coventry, writes in regard to this book of Isaac Taylor's: " In her first conversations with my father and mother, they were much interested in learning in what high estimation she held the writings of Isaac Taylor. My father* thought *she was a little disappointed on hearing that he was a Dissenter. She particularly enjoyed his ' Saturday Evening,' and spoke in years after to me of his ' Physical Theory of Another Life,' as exciting thought and leading speculation further than he would have desired. When his ' Ancient Christianity ' was published in numbers, Miss Evans took it in, and kindly forwarded the numbers to us. From the impression made on my own mind by unfavourable facts about ' The Fathers,' and from her own subsequent references to this work, I am inclined to think it had its influence in unsettling her views of Christianity."*

I have thought of you as *the* one who has ever shown herself so capable of consideration for my weakness and sympathy in my warm and easily fastened affections. My imagination is an enemy that must be cast down ere I can enjoy peace or exhibit uniformity of character. I know not which of its caprices I have most to dread, — that which incites it to spread sackcloth "above, below, around," or that which makes it "cheat my eye with blear illusion, and beget strange dreams" of excellence and beauty in beings and things of only working-day price. The beautiful heavens that we have lately enjoyed awaken in me an indescribable sensation of exultation in existence, and aspiration after all that is suited to engage an immaterial nature. I have not read very many of Mr. B.'s poems, nor any with much attention. I simply declare my determination not to feed on the broth of literature when I can get strong soup, — such, for instance, as Shelley's "Cloud," the five or six stanzas of which contain more poetic metal than is beat out in all Mr. B.'s pages. You must know I have had bestowed on me the very pretty cognomen of Clematis, which, in the floral language, means mental beauty. I cannot find in my heart to refuse it, though, like many other appellations, it has rather the appearance of a satire than a compliment. *Addio!* I will send your floral name in my next, when I have received my dictionary. My hand and mind are wearied with writing four pages of German and a letter of business.

Letter to Miss Lewis, 17th Sept. 1840.

Letter to Miss Lewis, 1st Oct. 1840.

My dear Veronica, — which, being interpreted, is fidelity in friendship, — Last week I was absent from home from Wednesday to Saturday, in quest of the "coy

maiden" Pleasure — at least nominally so, the real motive being rather to gratify another's feeling.[1] I heard the "Messiah" on Thursday morning at Birmingham, and some beautiful selections from other oratorios of Handel and Haydn on Friday. With a stupid, drowsy sensation, produced by standing sentinel over damson cheese and a warm stove, I cannot do better than ask you to read, if accessible, Wordsworth's short poem on the "Power of Sound," with which I have just been delighted. I have made an alteration in my plans with Mr. Brezzi, and shall henceforward take Italian and German alternately, so that I shall not be liable to the consciousness of having imperative employment for every interstice of time. There seems a greater affinity between German and my mind than Italian, though less new to me, possesses.

I am reading Schiller's "Maria Stuart," and Tasso.

I was pleased with a little poem I learnt a week or two ago in German; and as I want you to like it, I have just put the idea it contains into English doggerel, which quite fails to represent the beautiful simplicity and nature of the original, but yet, I hope, will give you sufficiently its sense to screen the odiousness of the translation *Eccola:* —

QUESTION AND ANSWER

"'Where blooms, O my father, a thornless rose?'
'That can I not tell thee, my child;
Not one on the bosom of earth e'er grows,
But wounds whom its charms have beguiled.'

'Would I'd a rose on my bosom to lie,
But I shrink from the piercing thorn:
I long, but I dare not its point defy;
I long, and I gaze forlorn.'

[1] Visit to Miss Rawlins, her brother's *fiancée.*

'Not so, O my child — round the stem again
Thy resolute fingers entwine;
Forego not the joy for its sister, pain —
Let the rose, the sweet rose, be thine.'"

Would not a parcel reach you by railway?

*This is the first allusion to the new means of locomotion, which would, no doubt, be attracting much interest in the Griff household, as valuation was a large part of Mr. Evans's business. Long years after, George Eliot wrote: —*

"Our midland plains have never lost their familiar expression and conservative spirit for me; yet at every other mile, since I first looked on them, some sign of world-wide change, some new direction of human labour, has wrought itself into what one may call the speech of the landscape. . . . There comes a crowd of burly navvies with pickaxes and barrows, and while hardly a wrinkle is made in the fading mother's face or a new curve of health in the blooming girl's, the hills are cut through, or the breaches between them spanned, we choose our level, and the white steam-pennon flies along it."

Letter to Miss Lewis, 27th Oct. 1840.

My only reason for writing is to obtain a timely promise that you will spend your holidays chiefly with me, that we may once more meet among scenes which, now I am called on to leave them, I find to have *grown in* to my affections. Carlyle says that to the artisans of Glasgow the world is not one of blue skies and a green carpet, but a world of copperas-fumes, low cellars, hard wages, "striking," and whiskey; and if the recollection of this picture did not remind me that gratitude should be my reservoir of feeling, that into which all that comes from above or around should be received as a source of fertilisation for my soul, I should give a lachry-

mose parody of the said description, and tell you all-seriously what I now tell you playfully, that mine is too often a world such as Wilkie can so well paint, — a walled-in world furnished with all the details which he remembers so accurately, and the least interesting part thereof is often what I suppose must be designated the intelligent; but I deny that it has even a comparative claim to the appellation, for give me a three-legged stool, and it will call up associations — moral, poetical, mathematical — if I do but ask it, while some human beings have the odious power of contaminating the very images that are enshrined as our soul's arcana. Their baleful touch has the same effect as would a uniformity in the rays of light, — it turns all objects to pale-lead colour. Oh, how luxuriously joyous to have the wind of heaven blow on one after being *stived* in a human atmosphere, — to feel one's heart leap up after the pressure that Shakspeare so admirably describes: "When a man's wit is not seconded by the forward chick understanding, it strikes a man as dead as a large reckoning in a small room." But it is time I check this Byronic invective, and, in doing so, I am reminded of Corinne's, or rather Oswald's, reproof, — "La vie est un *combat,* pas un *hymne.*" We should aim to be like a plant in the chamber of sickness, — dispensing purifying air even in a region that turns all pale its verdure, and cramps its instinctive propensity to expand. Society is a wide nursery of plants, where the hundreds decompose to nourish the future ten, after giving collateral benefits to their contemporaries destined for a fairer garden. An awful thought! one so heavy that if our souls could once sustain its whole weight, or rather if its whole weight were once to

drop on them, they would break and burst their tenements. How long will this continue? The cry of the martyrs heard by St. John finds an echo in every heart that, like Solomon's, groans under "the outrage and oppression with which earth is filled." Events are now so momentous, and the elements of society in so chemically critical a state, that a drop seems enough to change its whole form.

I am reading Harris's "Great Teacher," and am *innig bewegt*, as a German would say, by its stirring eloquence, which leaves you no time or strength for a cold estimate of the writer's strict merits. I wish I could read some extracts to you. Isaac Taylor's work is not yet complete. When it is so, I hope to reperuse it. Since I wrote to you I have had Aimé Martin's work, "L'Éducation des Mères," lent to me, and I have found it to be the real Greece whence "Woman's Mission" has only imported to us a few marbles — but! Martin is a *soi-disant* rational Christian, if I mistake him not. I send you an epitaph which he mentions on a tomb in Paris, — that of a mother: "Dors en paix, O ma mère; ton fils t'obéira toujours." I am reading eclectically Mrs. Hemans's poems, and venture to recommend to your perusal, if unknown to you, one of the longest ones, — "The Forest Sanctuary." I can give it my pet adjective, — Exquisite.

I have adopted as my motto, — "*Certum pete finem*," — Seek a sure end.[1]

Letter to Miss Lewis, 5th Dec. 1840.

Come when you would best like to do so: if my heart beat at all at the time, it will be with a more rapid motion than the general, from the joy of seeing you.

[1] By a curious coincidence, when she became Mrs. Cross, this actually was her motto.

I cannot promise you more than calmness when that flush is past, for I am aweary, aweary—longing for rest, which seems to fly from my very anticipations. But this wrought-up sensitiveness which makes me shrink from all contact is, I know, not for communication or sympathy, and is, from that very character, a kind of trial best suited for me. Whatever tends to render us ill-contented with ourselves, and more earnest aspirants after perfect truth and goodness, is gold, though it come to us all molten and burning, and we know not our treasure until we have had long smarting.

Letter to Miss Lewis, 21st Dec. 1840.

It is impossible, to me at least, to be poetical in cold weather. I understand the Icelanders have much national poetry, but I guess it was written in the neighbourhood of the boiling springs. I will promise to be as cheerful and as Christmas-like as my rickety body and chameleon-like spirits will allow. I am about to commence the making of mince-pies, with all the interesting sensations characterising young enterprise or effort.

Letter to Miss Lewis, 27th Jan. 1841.

Happily, the moody, melancholy temperament has some counterbalancing advantages to those of the sanguine: it *does* sometimes meet with results more favourable than it expected, and by its knack of imagining the pessimus, cheats the world of its power to disappoint. The very worm-like originator of this coil of sentiment is the fact that you write more cheerfully of yourself than I had been thinking of you, and that *ergo* I am pleased.

Letter to Miss Lewis, 11th Feb. 1841.

On Monday and Tuesday my father and I were occupied with the sale of furniture at our new house: it is probable that we shall migrate thither in a month.

I shall be incessantly hurried until after our departure, but at present I have to be grateful for a smooth passage through contemplated difficulties. Sewing is my staple article of commerce with the hard trader Time. Now the wind has veered to the south I hope to do much more, and that with greater zest than I have done for many months — I mean of all kinds.

I have been reading the three volumes of the "Life and Times of Louis the Fourteenth," and am as eagerly waiting for the fourth and last as any voracious novel-reader for Bulwer's last. I am afraid I am getting quite martial in my spirit, and, in the warmth of my sympathy for Turenne and Condé, losing my hatred of war. Such a conflict between *individual* and *moral* influence is no novelty. But certainly war, though the heaviest scourge with which the divine wrath against sin is manifested in Time, has been a necessary vent for impurities and a channel for tempestuous passions that must have otherwise made the whole earth, like the land of the devoted Canaanites, to vomit forth the inhabitants thereof. Awful as such a sentiment appears, it seems to me that in the present condition of man (and I do not mean this in the sense that Cowper does), such a purgation of the body politic is probably essential to its health. A foreign war would soon put an end to our national humours, that are growing to so alarming a head.

What do you think of the Progress of Architecture as a subject for Poetry?

Letter to Miss Lewis, 8th March, 1841.

I am just about to set out on a purchasing expedition to Coventry: you may therefore conceive that I am full of little plans and anxieties, and will understand

why I should be brief. I hope by the close of next week that we and our effects shall be deposited at Foleshill, and until then and afterwards I shall be fully occupied, so that I am sure you will not expect to hear from me for the next six weeks. One little bit of unreasonableness you must grant me, — the request for a letter from yourself within that time.

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER I

AUGUST 18, 1838, TO MARCH 8, 1841

Letters to Miss Lewis — First visit to London — Religious asceticism — Pascal — Hannah More's letters — Young's "Infidel Reclaimed" — Michaelmas visitors — Life of Wilberforce — Nineteenth birthday — Oratorio at Coventry — Religious objections to music — Letters to Mrs. Samuel Evans — Religious reflections — Besetting sin, ambition — Letters to Miss Lewis — Objections to fiction reading — Religious contentions on the nature of the visible Church — First poem — Account of books read and studies pursued — Wordsworth — Twentieth birthday — German begun — Plan of Chart of Ecclesiastical History — Religious controversies — Oxford Tracts — "Lyra Apostolica" — "Christian Year" — Chart of Ecclesiastical History forestalled — Italian begun — Trip to Derbyshire and Staffordshire — "Don Quixote" — Spenser's "Faery Queen" — Mrs. Somerville's "Connection of the Physical Sciences" — Dislike of housekeeping work — Removal to Coventry decided — "Ancient Christianity and the Oxford Tracts," by Isaac Taylor, and Mrs. John Cash's impression of its effect — Determination not to feed on the broth of literature — Visit to Birmingham to hear "Messiah" — Reading Schiller's "Maria Stuart" and Tasso — Translation of German poem — Depression of surroundings at Griff — Reading Harris's "Great Teacher," Aimé Martin's "L'Éducation des Mères," and Mrs. Hemans's Poems — Buying furniture at new house — Sewing — Reading "Life and Times of Louis XIV." — Removal to Foleshill Road, Coventry.

## CHAPTER II

*NEW circumstances now created a change almost amounting to a revolution in Miss Evans's life. Mr. Isaac Evans, who had been associated for some time with his father in the land agency business, married, and it was arranged that he should take over the establishment at Griff. This led to the removal in March, 1841, of Mr. Robert Evans and his daughter to a house on the Foleshill Road, in the immediate neighbourhood of Coventry. The house is still standing, although considerably altered, — a semi-detached house with a good bit of garden round it, and from its upper windows a wide view over the surrounding country, the immediate foreground being unfortunately, however, disfigured by the presence of mills and chimneys. It is town life now instead of country life, and we feel the effects at once in the tone of the subsequent letters. The friendships now formed with Mr. and Mrs. Bray and Miss Sara Hennell particularly, and the being brought within reach of a small circle of cultivated people generally, render this change of residence an exceedingly important factor in George Eliot's development. It chanced that the new house was next door to Mrs. Pears, a sister of Mr. Bray, and as there had been some acquaintance in days gone by between him and the family at Griff, this close neighbourhood led to an exchange of visits. The following extracts from letters to Miss Lewis show how the acquaintance ripened, and will give some indications of the first impressions of Coventry life: —*

Last evening I mentioned you to my neighbour (Mrs. Pears), who is growing into the more precious character of a friend. I have seriously to be thankful for far better health than I have pos-

sessed, I think, for years, and I am imperatively called on to trade diligently with this same talent.

Letter to Miss Lewis, Saturday evening, April, 1841.

I am likely to be more and more busy, if I succeed in a project that is just now occupying my thoughts and feelings. I seem to be tried in a contrary mode to that in which most of my dearest friends are being tutored, — tried in the most dangerous way, — by prosperity. Solomon says, "In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider." It seems to me that a transposition, *vice versâ*, of the admonitions would be equally salutary and just. Truly, as the prophet of Selwyn has told us, "Heaven is formidable in its favours." Not that a wise and grateful reception of blessings obliges us to stretch our faces to the length of one of Cromwell's Barebones; nor to shun that joyous bird-like enjoyment of things (which, though perishable as to their actual existence, will be embalmed to eternity in the precious spices of gratitude) that is distinct from levity and voluptuousness. I am really crowded with engagements just now, and I have added one to the number of my correspondents.

The whole of last week was devoted to a bridesmaid's [1] duties, and each day of this has been partially occupied in paying or receiving visits. I have a calm in sea and sky that I doubt not will erelong be interrupted. This is not our rest, if we are among those for whom there remaineth one, and to pass through life without tribulation (or, as Jeremy Taylor beautifully says, with only such a measure of it as may be compared to an artificial discord in music, which nurses the ear for the returning

Letter to Miss Lewis, April, 1841.

[1] Brother's marriage.

harmony) would leave us destitute of one of the marks that invariably accompany salvation, and of that fellowship in the sufferings of the Redeemer which can alone work in us a resemblance to one of the most prominent parts of His divinely perfect character, and enable us to obey the injunction, "In patience possess your souls." I have often observed how, in secular things, active occupation in procuring the necessaries of life renders the character indifferent to trials not affecting that one object. There is an analogous influence produced in the Christian by a vigorous pursuit of duty, a determination to work while it is day.

Letter to Miss Lewis, 28th April, 1841.

One of the penalties women must pay for modern deference to their intellect is, I suppose, that they must give reasons for their conduct after the fashion of men. The days are past for pleading a woman's reason. The truth is, that the hindrances to my writing have been like the little waves of the brooks that look so lovely just now, — they have arisen one after another close to my side, but when I have looked back I have found the ripples too insignificant to be marked in the distance. My father's longer *séjours* at home than formerly, and multiplied acquaintances and engagements, are really valid excuses for me hitherto, but I do not intend to need them in future; I hope to be a "snapper up of unconsidered" moments. I have just been interrupted by a visit from a lass of fourteen who has despoiled me of half an hour, and I am going out to dinner, so that I cannot follow the famous advice, "Hasten slowly." I suppose that you framed your note on the principle that a sharp and sudden sound is the most rousing, but there are *addenda* about yourself that I want to know,

though I dare not ask for them. I do not feel settled enough to write more at present. How is it that Erasmus could write volumes on volumes and multifarious letters besides, while I, whose labours hold about the same relation to his as an ant-hill to a pyramid or a drop of dew to the ocean, seem too busy to write a few? A most posing query!

Letter to Miss Lewis, Thursday morning, June, 1841.

I have of late felt a depression that has disordered the vision of my mind's eye and made me *alive* to what is certainly a fact (though my imagination when I am in health is an adept at concealing it), that I am *alone* in the world. I do not mean to be so sinful as to say that I have not friends *most* undeservedly kind and tender, and disposed to form a far too favourable estimate of me, but I mean that I have no one who enters into my pleasures or my griefs, no one with whom I can pour out my soul, no one with the same yearnings, the same temptations, the same delights as myself. I merely mention this as the impression that obtrudes itself when my body tramples on its keeper, — (a metaphor borrowed from a menagerie of wild beasts if it should happen to puzzle you!) — mysterious "connection exquisite of distant worlds" that we present! A few drops of steel will perhaps make me laugh at the simple objects that, in gloom and mist, I conjure into stalking apparitions.

Letter to Miss Lewis at Margate, 31st July, 1841.

I am beginning to be interlaced with multiplying ties of duty and affection that, while they render my new home happier, forbid me to leave it on a pleasure-seeking expedition. I think, indeed, that both my heart and limbs would leap to behold

the great and wide sea, — that old ocean on which man can leave no trace.

I have been revelling in Nichol's "Architecture of the Heavens and Phenomena of the Solar System," and have been in imagination winging my flight from system to system, from universe to universe, trying to conceive myself in such a position and with such a visual faculty as would enable me to enjoy what Young enumerates among the novelties of the "Stranger" man when he bursts the shell to

Letter to Miss Lewis, 3d Sept. 1841.

> "Behold an infinite of floating worlds
> Divide the crystal waves of ether pure
> In endless voyage without port."

"Hospitable infinity!" Nichol beautifully says. How should I love to have a thoroughgoing student with me, that we might read together! We might each alternately employ the voice and the fingers, and thus achieve just twice as much as a poor solitary. I am more impressed than ever with a truth beautifully expressed in "Woman's Mission" — "Learning is only so far valuable as it serves to enlarge and enlighten the bounds of conscience." This I believe it eminently does when pursued humbly and piously, and from a belief that it is a solemn duty to cultivate every faculty of our nature so far as primary obligations allow. There is an exhortation of St. Paul's that I should love to take as my motto: "Finally, my brethren, whatsoever things are honest" (you know the continuation), — "if there be *any* virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." I have had to lament lately that mine is not a *hard-working* mind, — it requires frequent rest. I am violently in love with the Italian fashion of repeating an adjective or adverb, and

even noun, to give force to expression: there is so much more fire in it than in our circumlocutory phrases, our dull "verys" and "exceedinglys" and "extremelys." I strongly recommend Hallam to you. I shall read it again if I live. When a sort of haziness comes over the mind, making one feel weary of articulated or written signs of ideas, does not the notion of a less laborious mode of communication, of a perception approaching more nearly to intuition, seem attractive? Nathless, I love words: they are the quoits, the bows, the staves that furnish the gymnasium of the mind. Without them, in our present condition, our intellectual strength would have no implements. I have been rather humbled in thinking that if I were thrown on an uncivilised island, and had to form a literature for its inhabitants from my own mental stock, how very fragmentary would be the information with which I could furnish them! It would be a good mode of testing one's knowledge to set one's self the task of writing sketches of all subjects that have entered into one's studies entirely from the chronicles of memory. The prevalence of misery and want in this boasted nation of prosperity and glory is appalling, and really seems to call us away from mental luxury. Oh to be doing some little toward the regeneration of this groaning, travailing creation! I am supine and stupid,— overfed with favours, while the haggard looks and piercing glance of want and conscious hopelessness are to be seen in the streets.

Letter to Miss Lewis, 1st Oct. 1841.

Is not this a true autumn day? Just the still melancholy that I love, — that makes life and nature harmonise. The birds are consulting about their migrations, the trees are putting on the hectic or the pallid

hues of decay, and begin to strew the ground, that one's very footsteps may not disturb the repose of earth and air, while they give us a scent that is a perfect anodyne to the restless spirit. Delicious autumn! My very soul is wedded to it, and if I were a bird I would fly about the earth seeking the successive autumns.

I am going, I hope, to-day to effect a breach in the thick wall of indifference behind which the denizens of Coventry seem inclined to intrench themselves; but I fear I shall fail.

Letter to Miss Lewis, 2d Nov. 1841.

*This probably refers to the first visit paid by Miss Evans to Mr. and Mrs. Bray at their house. They had met in the previous May at Mrs. Pears's; but although they were at once mutually attracted, the acquaintance does not seem to have been immediately prosecuted further. Now, however, any time lost in the beginning was quickly made up, and it is astonishing how rapidly the most intimate relations were formed. Mr. Bray was a ribbon-manufacturer, well-to-do at that time, and had a charming house, Rosehill, with a beautiful lawn and garden, in the outskirts of Coventry. Only a part of his time was occupied with his business, and he had much leisure and opportunity, of which he availed himself, for liberal self-education and culture. His was a robust, self-reliant mind. Already, in 1839, he had published a work on the "Education of the Feelings," viewed from the phrenological standpoint; and in this year, 1841, appeared his most important book, "The Philosophy of Necessity." He always remained a sincere and complete believer in the science of phrenology. He had married Miss Caroline Hennell, sister of the Mr. Charles Hennell who published in 1838 "An Inquiry concerning the Origin of Christianity," — a remarkable book, which was translated into German, Strauss contributing a preface to the translation. It will be seen from subsequent letters how greatly Miss Evans was interested in this book, — how*

*much she admired it; and the reading of it, combined with the association with her new friends, — with the philosophical speculations of Mr. Bray, and with Mrs. Bray's sympathy in her brother's critical and sceptical standpoint, — no doubt hastened the change in her attitude towards the dogmas of the old religion. In the Analytical Catalogue of Mr. Chapman's publications, issued in 1852, there is an analysis of Hennell's "Inquiry" done by Miss Evans, which may be inserted here, as giving her idea of the book eleven years later: —*

"The first edition of this work appeared in 1838, when the present strong current of public opinion in favour of free religious discussion had not yet set in; and it probably helped to generate the tone of thought exhibited in more recent works of the same class, to which circumstances have given a wider fame, — works which, like the above, in considering questions of Biblical criticism and the philosophy of Christianity, combine high refinement, purity of aim, and candour, with the utmost freedom of investigation, and with a popularity of style which wins them the attention not only of the learned but of the practical.

"The author opens his inquiry with a Historical Sketch, extending from the Babylonish Captivity to the end of the first century, the design of which is to show how, abstracting the idea of the miraculous, or any speciality of divine influence, the gradual development of certain elements in Jewish character, and the train of events in Jewish history, contributed to form a suitable nidus for the production of a character and career like that of Jesus, and how the devoted enthusiasm generated by such a career in his immediate disciples rendering it easier for them to modify their ideas of the Messiah than to renounce their belief in their Mas-

ter's Messiahship, — the accession of Gentile converts and the destruction of the last remnant of theocracy necessitating a wider interpretation of Messianic hopes, — the junction of Christian ideas with Alexandrian Platonism, and the decrepitude of Polytheism, combined to associate the name of Jesus, his Messiahship, his death and his resurrection, with a great moral and religious revolution. This historical sketch, which is under the disadvantage of presenting, synthetically, ideas based on a subsequent analysis, is intended to meet the difficulty so often urged, and which might be held to nullify the value of a critical investigation, that Christianity is a fact, for which, if the supposition of a miraculous origin be rejected, no adequate and probable causes can be assigned, and that thus, however defective may be the evidence of the New Testament history, its acceptance is the least difficult alternative.

"In the writer's view, the characteristics of the Essene sect, as traced by Josephus and Philo, justify the supposition that Jesus was educated in their school of philosophy; but with the elevated belief and purity of life which belonged to this sect, he united the ardent patriotic ideas which had previously animated Judas of Galilee, who resisted the Roman authority on the ground that God was the only ruler and lord of the Jews. The profound consciousness of genius, a religious fervour which made the idea of the divine ever present to him, patriotic zeal, and a spirit of moral reform, together with a participation in the enthusiastic belief of his countrymen that the long-predicted exaltation of Israel was at hand, combined to produce in the mind of Jesus the gradual conviction that he was himself the Messiah, with whose reign

that exaltation would commence. He began, as John the Baptist had already done, to announce 'the kingdom of heaven,' — a phrase which, to the Jewish mind, represented the national glorification of Israel; and by his preaching, and the influence of his powerful personality, he won multitudes in Galilee to a participation in his belief that he was the expected son of David. His public entrance into Jerusalem in the guise which tradition associated with the Messiah, when he sanctioned the homage of the multitude, was probably the climax of his confidence that a great demonstration of divine power, in concurrence with popular enthusiasm, would seat him triumphantly on the throne of David. No such result appearing, his views of the divine dispensation with respect to himself began to change, and he felt the presentiment that he must enter on his Messianic reign through the gates of suffering and death. Viewing Jesus as a pretender not only to spiritual but to political power, as one who really expected the subversion of the existing government to make way for his own kingship (though he probably relied on divine rather than on human means), he must necessarily have appeared in a dangerous light to those of his countrymen who were in authority, and who were anxious at any price to preserve public tranquillity in the presence of the Roman power, ready to visit with heavy vengeance any breach of order, and to deprive them of the last remnants of their independence; and hence the motives for his arrest and execution. To account for the belief of the disciples in the resurrection of their Master, — a belief which appears to have been sincere, — the author thinks it necessary to suppose a certain nucleus of fact, and this he finds in the disappear-

ance of the body of Jesus, a point attested by all the four Evangelists. The secret of this disappearance probably lay with Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, who were anxious to avoid implicating themselves with that fermentation of regretful enthusiasm to which a resort of the disciples to the grave might give rise. Animated by a belief in the resurrection, — which, being more harmless in the eyes of the authorities than that in a living Messiah, they were permitted to preach with little molestation, — the zeal of the disciples won many converts; a new impulse was given to their cause by the accession of Paul, who became the chief missionary of the new faith, as construed by himself, to the Gentiles; and the concurrence of the causes indicated above, modifying the early creed of the apostles, and blending it with trains of thought already prevalent, bore along Christianity in its conquest over the minds of men until it became the dominant religion of the Roman world.

"Having sought to show, in this preliminary sketch, that a belief in miracles is not entailed on us by the fact of the early growth of Christianity, the author enters on the inquiry whether the claims of the Evangelical writers on our credence are such as to sustain the miraculous part of their narratives. The answer is in the negative. He discusses, first, the date and credibility of each Gospel, and concludes that while Matthew has many marvellous stories, incongruous in themselves, and not only unsupported but contradicted by the other Evangelists, he nevertheless presents the most comprehensible account of the career of Jesus; that in Mark, evidently more remote in time and circumstances, both from his events and from Jewish

modes of thought, the idea conveyed of Jesus is much vaguer and less explicable; that in Luke there is a still further modification of his character, which has acquired a tinge of asceticism; while in John the style of his teaching is wholly changed, and instead of the graphic parable and the pithy apothegm, he utters long mystical discourses in the style of the first epistle bearing the name of the same Evangelist. Mr. Hennell, however, adheres to the conclusion that the substance of this Gospel came from the apostle John at an advanced age, when both the events of his early manhood and the scenes of his native land lay in the far distance. The writer then enters on a special examination of the Resurrection and Ascension, and the other miracles in the Gospels and the Acts, and inquires how far they are sustained by the Apostolic Epistles. He examines the prophecies of the Old Testament supposed to have been fulfilled in Jesus, and also the predictions of Jesus himself concerning his death and resurrection; and finally, he considers the character, views, and doctrine of Christ. According to him, an impartial study of the conduct and sayings of Jesus, as exhibited in the Gospels, produces the conviction that he was an enthusiast and a revolutionist, no less than a reformer and a moral and religious teacher. Passages are adduced from the Old Testament, and from the Apocryphal and Rabbinical writings, to show that there is scarcely anything absolutely original in the teaching of Jesus; but, in the opinion of the author, he manifests a freedom and individuality in the use of his materials, and a general superiority of tone and selection, which, united with the devotion of his life to what he held the highest purpose, mark him to be of an order

of minds occurring but at rare intervals in the history of our race.

"Shortly after the appearance of this work, it was translated into German, through the instrumentality of Dr. Strauss, who, in the Preface he prefixed to it, says: 'Not sufficiently acquainted with German to read continuously a learned work in that language, the labours of our theologians were only accessible to him' (the author of the 'Inquiry') 'so far as they were written in Latin, or translated into English, or treated of in English writings or periodicals: especially he is unacquainted with what the Germans have effected in the criticism of the Gospels since Schleiermacher's work on Luke, and even the earlier commentators he knows but imperfectly. Only so much the more remarkable is it, however, that both in the principles and in the main results of his investigation, he is on the very track which has been entered on amongst us in recent years. . . . That at certain periods, certain modes of thought lie as it were in the atmosphere, . . . and come to light in the most remote places without perceptible media of communication, is shown, not only by the contents, but by the spirit, of Mr. Hennell's work. No further traces of the ridicule and scorn which characterise his countrymen of the Deistical school; the subject is treated in the earnest and dignified tone of the truth-seeker, not with the rancour of a passionate polemic; we nowhere find him deriving religion from priestcraft, but from the tendencies and wants of human nature. . . . These elevated views, which the learned German of our day appropriates as the fruit of the religious and scientific advancement of his nation, this Englishman, to whom most of the means at our command were

wanting, has been able to educe entirely from himself. . . . An Englishman, a merchant, a man of the world, he possesses, both by nature and by training, the practical insight, the sure tact, which lays hold on realities. The solution of problems over which the German flutters with many circuits of learned formulæ, our English author often succeeds in seizing at one spring. . . . To the learned he often presents things under a surprisingly new aspect; to the unlearned, invariably under that which is the most comprehensible and attractive.' "

*The reading of Mr. Hennell's book, which followed close on the first visit to the Brays, had no doubt an important influence on George Eliot's development; but evidently there had been a good deal of half-unconscious preparation beforehand (as indicated by Mrs. Cash's remarks on Isaac Taylor's work in the last chapter), which was greatly stimulated now by the contact with new minds.*[1] *The following extract from a letter to Miss Lewis, dated 13th November, 1841, apparently fixes the date of the first acknowledgment by herself that her opinions were undergoing so momentous a change.*

Letter to Miss Lewis, 13th Nov. 1841.

My whole soul has been engrossed in the most interesting of all inquiries for the last few days, and to what result my thoughts may lead, I know not, — possibly to one that will startle you; but my only desire is to know the truth, my only fear to cling to error. I venture to say our love will not decompose under the influence of separation, unless you excommunicate me for differing from you in opinion. Think, — is there any *conceivable* alteration in me that would prevent your coming to me at Christmas? I long to have a friend such as you are, I think I may say, alone to me, to unburthen every thought

[1] See Appendix at end of volume.

and difficulty, — for I am still a solitary, though near a city. But we have the universe to talk with, infinity in which to stretch the gaze of hope, and an all-bountiful, all-wise Creator in whom to confide, — He who has given us the untold delights of which our reason, our emotion, our sensations are the ever-springing sources.

What a pity that while mathematics are indubitable, immutable, and no one doubts the properties of a triangle or a circle, doctrines infinitely important to man are buried in a charnel-heap of bones over which nothing is heard but the barks and growls of contention! "Unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united."

Letter to Miss Lewis, 8th Dec. 1841.

*It was impossible for such a nature as Miss Evans's, in the enthusiasm of this first great change, to rest satisfied in compliance with the old forms, and she was so uneasy in an equivocal position that she determined to give up going to church. This was an unforgivable offence in the eyes of her father, who was a churchman of the old school, and nearly led to a family rupture. He went so far as to put into an agent's hands the lease of the house in the Foleshill Road, with the intention of going to live with his married daughter. Upon this, Miss Evans made up her mind to go into lodgings at Leamington, and to try to support herself by teaching. The first letter to Mrs. Bray refers to this incident: —*

My guardian angel Mrs. Pears has just sent for me to hear your kind note, which has done my aching limbs a little good. I shall be most thankful for the opportunity of going to Leamington, and Mrs. Pears is willing to go too. There is but *one* woe, that of leaving my dear father, — all else, doleful lodgings, scanty meals, and *gazing-stockism,* are quite

Letter to Mrs. Bray, Jan. 1842.

indifferent to me. Therefore do not fear for me when I am once settled in my home — wherever it may be — and freed from wretched suspense.

Letter to Mrs. Pears, Friday evening, Feb. 1842.

Far from being weary of your dear little Henry, his matin visits are as cheering to me as those of any little bird

"That comes in spite of sorrow,
And at my window bids good-morrow."

We have not, perhaps, been so systematic as a regular tutor and pupil would have been, but we crave indulgence for some laxity. I was really touched that you should think of *me* while among friends more closely linked with you in every way. I was beginning to get used to the conviction that, ivy-like as I am by nature, I must (as we see ivy do sometimes) shoot out into an isolated tree. Never again imagine that you need ask forgiveness for speaking or writing to me on subjects to me more interesting than aught else; on the contrary, believe that I really enjoy conversation of this nature: blank silence and cold reserve are the only bitters I care for in my intercourse with you. I can rejoice in all the joys of humanity, — in all that serves to elevate and purify feeling and action; nor will I quarrel with the million who, I am persuaded, are with me in intention, though our dialects differ. Of course I must desire the ultimate downfall of error, for no error is innocuous; but this assuredly will occur without my proselytising aid, and the best proof of a real love of the truth — that freshest stamp of divinity — is a calm confidence in its intrinsic power to secure its own high destiny, — that of universal empire. Do not fear that I will become a stagnant pool by a self-sufficient determination only to listen to my own echo;

to read the yea, yea on my own side, and be most comfortably deaf to the nay, nay. Would that all rejected *practically* this maxim! To *fear* the examination of any proposition appears to me an intellectual and a moral palsy that will ever hinder the firm grasping of any substance whatever. For my part, I wish to be among the ranks of that glorious crusade that is seeking to set Truth's Holy Sepulchre free from a usurped domination. We shall then see her resurrection! Meanwhile, although I cannot rank among my principles of action a fear of vengeance eternal, gratitude for predestined salvation, or a revelation of future glories as a reward, I fully participate in the belief that the only heaven here, or hereafter, is to be found in conformity with the will of the Supreme; a continual aiming at the attainment of the perfect ideal, the true *logos* that dwells in the bosom of the one Father. I hardly know whether I am ranting after the fashion of one of the Primitive Methodist prophetesses, with a cart for her rostrum. I am writing so fast. Good-bye, and blessings on you, as they will infallibly be on the children of peace and virtue.

*Again about the same date in 1842 she writes to Mrs. Bray:* —

A heart full of love and gratitude to you for all your kindness in thought and act to me undeserving. I daresay my manner belies my feelings; but friendship must live by faith and not by sight, and I shall be a great gainer by leaving you to interpret my mystic character without any other key than your own goodness.

Letter to Mrs. Bray, Feb. 1842.

*The last letter of the series to Miss Lewis also refers to the difficulties of the situation.*

I daresay you have added, subtracted, and divided suppositions until you think you have a sure product, — viz., a good quantum, or rather, a bad one, of indifference and forgetfulness as the representation of my conduct towards you. If so, revise your arithmetic, for be it known to you that, having had my propensities, sentiments, and intellect gauged a second time, I am pronounced to possess a large organ of "adhesiveness," a still larger one of "firmness," and as large of "conscientiousness," — hence if I should turn out a very weather-cock and a most pitiful truckler, you will have data for the exercise of faith maugre common-sense, common justice, and the testimony of your eyes and ears.

Letter to Miss Lewis, 19th Feb. 1842.

How do you go on for society, for communion of spirit, the drop of nectar in the cup of mortals? But why do I say the drop? The mind that feels its value will get large draughts from some source, if denied it in the most commonly chosen way.

> 'Mid the rich store of nature's gifts to man
> Each has his loves, close wedded to his soul
> By fine association's golden links.
> As the Great Spirit bids creation teem
> With conscious being and intelligence,
> So man, His miniature resemblance, gives
> To matter's every form a speaking soul,
> An emanation from his spirit's fount,
> The impress true of its peculiar seal.
> Here finds he thy best image, sympathy.

Beautiful ego-ism, to quote one's own. But where is not this same ego? The martyr at the stake seeks its gratification as much as the court sycophant, the difference lying in the comparative dignity and beauty of the two egos. People absurdly talk of self-denial. Why, there is none in Virtue to a being of moral excellence: the greatest torture to such a soul would be to run counter to the

dictates of conscience; to wallow in the slough of meanness, deception, revenge, or sensuality. This was Paul's idea in the 1st chap. of 2d Epistle to Timothy (I think that is the passage).

I have had a weary week. At the beginning more than the usual amount of *cooled* glances, and exhortations to the suppression of self-conceit. The former are so many hailstones that make me wrap more closely around me the mantle of determinate purpose; the latter are needful, and have a tendency to exercise forbearance, that well repays the temporary smart. The heart knoweth its own, whether bitterness or joy: let us, dearest, beware how we, *even with good intentions*, press a finger's weight on the already bruised.

*And about the same date she writes to Mrs. Bray:* —

Letter to Mrs. Bray, end of Feb. 1842.

I must relieve my conscience before I go to bed by entering a protest against every word or accent of discontent that I uttered this morning. If I have ever complained of any person or circumstance, I do penance by eating my own words. When my real self has regained its place, I can shake off my troubles "like dewdrops from the lion's mane," and then I feel the baseness of imputing my sorrows to others rather than to my own pitiful weakness. But I do not write for your forgiveness; that I know I have. I only want to satisfy my indignation against myself.

*The conclusion of the matter was, that Mr. Evans withdrew his house from the agent's hands, and his daughter went to stay at Griff, with Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Evans, whence she writes the following letter to Mrs. Pears:* —

I have just been climbing up some favourite old hills, or rather hillocks, and if I could see you I should find myself in high preparation for one of my thorough chats. Oh if I could transport myself to your dining-room, where I guess you and Mr. Pears are sitting in anticipation of tea, carrying on no "holy war," but at peace with the world and its opinions, or, if ever you do battle, in the happy ranks of the majority, I could kiss you into sublime liberality! How are you and your dear husband and children? It seems a week of years instead of days since you said to me your kind good-bye, and as I have tried your magnanimity quite long enough to be assured that you will not let me hear of you without a beseeching letter from me, I snatch half an hour from a too short day for the generous purpose of doubly qualifying myself, first by pouring out the contents of my gossip-wallet, and then quietly awaiting the news I want to hear of you. I have here in every way abundant and unlooked-for blessings, — delicacy and consideration from all whom I have seen; and I really begin to recant my old belief about the indifference of all the world towards me, for my acquaintances of this neighbourhood seem to seek an opportunity of smiling on me in spite of my heresy. All these things, however, are but the fringe and ribbons of happiness. They are *ad*herent not *in*herent, and without any affectation I feel myself to be acquiring what I must hold to be a precious possession, an independence of what is baptised by the world external good. There are externals (at least, they are such in common thought) that I could ill part with, — the deep, blue, glorious heavens, bending as they

Letter to Mrs. Pears, Thursday, March, 1842.

do over all, presenting the same arch, emblem of a truer omnipresence, wherever we may be chased, and all the sweet peace-breathing sights and sounds of this lovely earth. These, and the thoughts of the good and great, are an inexhaustible world of delight; and the felt desire to be one in will and design with the great mind that has laid open to us these treasures is the sun that warms and fructifies it. I am more and more impressed with the duty of *finding* happiness. On a retrospection of the past month, I regret nothing so much as my own impetuosity both of feeling and judging. I am not inclined to be sanguine as to my dear father's future determination, and I sometimes have an intensely vivid consciousness, which I only allow to be a fleeting one, of all that is painful and that has been so. I can only learn that my father has commenced his alterations at Packington, but he only appears to be temporarily acquiescing in my brother's advice "not to be in a hurry." I do not intend to remain here longer than three weeks, or, at the very farthest, a month; and if I am not then recalled, I shall write for definite directions. I must have a *home*, not a visiting place. I wish you would learn something from my father, and send me word how he seems disposed. I hope you get long walks on these beautiful days. You would love to hear the choristers we have here; they are hymning away incessantly. Can you not drive over and see me? Do come by hook or by crook. Why, Mr. Pears could almost walk hither. I am becoming very hurried, for most welcome tea is in the vicinity, and I must be busy after I have imbibed its inspiration. You will write to me to-morrow, will you not? and pray insist on Mr. Pears writing an appendix.

I had a note from Mrs. Bray this morning, and I liked it better than my breakfast. So do give me a little treat on Saturday. Blessings on you and yours, as all forlorn beggars have said from time immemorial to their benefactors; but real feeling, you know, will sometimes slip into a hackneyed guise.

*Miss Evans remained for about three weeks at Griff, at the end of which time, through the intervention of her brother, the Brays, and Miss Rebecca Franklin, the father was very glad to receive her again, and she resumed going to church as before.*

*It will be seen from a subsequent noteworthy letter to Miss Sara Hennell, dated 19th October, 1843, that Miss Evans's view of the best course to be pursued under similar circumstances had already undergone considerable modifications, and in the last year of her life she told me that, although she did not think she had been to blame, few things had occasioned her more regret than this temporary collision with her father, which might, she thought, have been avoided by a little management.*

*In July of this year (1842) Miss Sara Hennell — the gifted sister of Mrs. Bray — came to Rosehill, on one of her occasional visits to Coventry, and completed the trio destined to exert the most important influence over the life of George Eliot. The individual characters of these three friends, and the relations each bore to their correspondent, will unfold themselves in the letters. It is only necessary here to say that the two ladies — Cara and Sara, as they are always addressed — now became like sisters to Miss Evans, and Mr. Bray her most intimate male friend, and the letters to them form an almost unbroken chain during all the remainder of George Eliot's life.*

*To us Miss Sara Hennell is the most important correspondent, for it is to her that Miss Evans mainly turns now for intellectual sympathy; to Mrs. Bray when she is in pain or trouble, and wants affectionate companion-*

*ship: with Mr. Bray she quarrels, and the humorous side of her nature is brought out. Every good story goes to him, with a certainty that it will be appreciated. With all three it is a beautiful and consistent friendship, running like a thread through the woof of the coming thirty-eight years. For the next twelve years, as will be seen, it is quite the most important thread; and although later it naturally became very much less important, it was never dropped except for a moment in 1854, owing to a brief misunderstanding of letters, which will appear in its due place.*

*The following letters to Miss Sara Hennell show what was passing from 30th August, 1842, to April, 1843: —*

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 30th Aug. 1842.

How I have delighted in the thought that there are beings who are better than their promises beyond the regions of waking and sleeping dreams.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, Friday, Sept. 1842.

I have not yet accounted for my tardiness in writing, which, I assure you, is no representation of my usual habit, and has been occasioned only by a week's indisposition, the foster-parent to the ill-favoured offspring of my character and circumstances, gloom and stolidity, and I could not write to you with such companions to my thought. I am anxious that you should not imagine me unhappy even in my most melancholy moods, for I hold all indulgence of sadness that has the slightest tincture of discontent to be a grave delinquency. I think there can be few who more truly feel than I that this is a world of bliss and beauty, — that is, that bliss and beauty are the end, the tendency of creation; and evils are the shadows that are the only conditions of light in the picture, and I live in much, much enjoyment.

I am beginning to enjoy the " Eneid," though,

I suppose, much in the same way as the uninitiated enjoy wine compared with the connoisseurs.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 24 Nov. 1842.

I have been in high displeasure with myself, have thought my soul only fit for limbo to keep company with other abortions, and my life the shallowest, muddiest, most unblessing stream. Having got my head above this slough of despond, I feel quite inclined to tell you how much pleasure your letter gave me. You observe in your note that some persons say the unsatisfied longing we feel in ourselves for something better than the greatest perfection to be found on earth is a proof that the true object of our desires lies beyond it. Assuredly this earth is not the home of the spirit — it will rest only in the bosom of the Infinite. But the non-satisfaction of the affections and intellect being inseparable from the unspeakable advantage of such a mind as that of man in connection with his corporal condition and *terrene* destiny, forms not at present an argument with me for the realisation of particular desires.

*The next letter refers to Miss Mary Hennell's*[1] *last illness.*

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 7th Jan. 1843.

I cannot help wishing to tell you, now that you are in trouble and anxiety, how dear you are to me, and how the recollection of you is ever freshening in my mind. You have need of all your cheeriness and energy; and if they do not fail, I think it almost enviable, as far as one's self is concerned (not, of course, when the sufferer is remembered), to have the care of a sick-room, with its twilight and tip-

[1] Miss Mary Hennell was the author of "An Outline of the Various Social Systems founded on the Principle of Co-operation," published in 1841.

toe stillness, and helpful activity. I have always had a peculiarly peaceful feeling in such a scene.

*Again, after the death of Miss Mary Hennell, there is a letter to her sister Sara.*

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, April, 1843.

We always find that our stock of appreciated good can never be really diminished. When the chief desire of the eyes is taken, we can afford a gaze to hitherto unnoticed possessions; and even when the top-most boughs are lopped, a thousand shoots spring from below with the energy of new life. So it will be with you; but you cannot yet look beyond the present, nor is it desirable that you should. It would not be well for us to overleap one grade of joy or suffering: our life would lose its completeness and beauty.

*Rosehill not only afforded a pleasant variety in the Coventry life, as most visitors to the town of any note found their way there, but the Brays were also frequently in the habit of making little holiday excursions, in many of which Miss Evans now joined. Thus we find them in May, 1843, all going to Stratford and Malvern, together with Mr. Charles Hennell and Miss Sara Hennell, for a week; and again in July of that year the same party, accompanied by Miss Brabant, daughter of Dr. Brabant of Devizes, went on a fortnight's tour, visiting Tenby amongst other places. This trip is chiefly memorable from the fact that it was indirectly responsible for Miss Evans undertaking the translation of Strauss's "Leben Jesu." For Miss Brabant (to whom the translation had been confided by Mr. Joseph Parkes of Birmingham and a group of friends) became engaged to be married to Mr. Charles Hennell; and shortly after her marriage she handed the work over to Miss Evans.*

*In the next two letters to Miss Sara Hennell there are allusions to the approaching marriage, which took place*

*in London on 1st November, 1843, — the Brays and Miss Evans being present.*

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 16th Sept. 1843.

Many thanks for procuring me the hymns and anthems. I was right glad to play "Ancient of Ages" again, and I shall like still better to sing it with you when we meet. That that is to be so soon, and under circumstances so joyful, are among the *mirabilia* of this changing world. To see and re-see such a cluster of not indifferent persons as the programme for the wedding gives, will be almost too large a *bonne bouche*.

I saw Robert Owen yesterday, Mr. and Mrs. Bray having kindly asked me to dine with him, and I think if his system prosper it will be in spite of its founder, and not because of his advocacy.

*The next letter to Mrs. Bray gives a pleasant glimpse of their studies together, and of the little musical society that was in the habit of meeting at Rosehill to play concerted pieces.*

Letter to Mrs. Bray, no date, 1843.

I only wish you would change houses with the mayor, that I might get to you when I would. I send you the first part of "Wallenstein," with the proposition that we should study that in conjunction with the "Thirty Years' War" as I happen to have a loose copy. We had better omit the "Lager," and begin "Die Piccolomini." You shall have "Joan of Arc," my grand favourite, as a *bonne bouche* when you have got through "Wallenstein" which will amply repay you for any trouble in translating it, and is not more difficult than your reading ought to be now. I have skimmed Manzoni, who has suffered sadly in being poured out of silver into pewter. The chapter on Philosophy

and Theology is worth reading. Miss Brabant sent me my Hyperion with a note the other day. She had put no direction besides Coventry, and the parcel had consequently been sent to some other Miss Evans, and my choice little sentimental treasures, alas! exposed to vulgar gaze. Thank you for the manual, which I have had so long. I trust I did not bestow those scratches on the cover. I have been trying to find a French book that you were not likely to have read, but I do not think I have one, unless it be "Gil Blas," which you are perhaps too virtuous to have read, though how any one can opine it to have a vicious tendency I am at a loss to conjecture. They might as well say that to condemn a person to eat a whole plum-pudding would deprive him of all future relish for plain food. I have had a visitor ever since Saturday, and she will stay till Saturday again. I cannot desire that you should *un*ask Violin and Flute, unless a postponement would be in every way as agreeable to you and them. If you have them, you will give them much more pleasure as Piano than I, so do not think of me in the matter for a moment. Good-bye; and remember to treat your cold as if it were an orphan's cold, or a widow's cold, or any one's cold but your own.

*The following is the letter before referred to as containing an important and noteworthy declaration of opinion on the very interesting question of conformity:* —

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 19th Oct. 1843.

The first thing I have to say to you is to entreat that you and Mrs. Hennell will not perplex yourselves for a moment about my accommodation during the night. I am so well now that a hearthrug would

be as luxurious a couch as I should need, and I defy anything short of a kettledrum or my conscience to keep me awake after a long day.

The subject of your conversation with Miss D. is a very important one, and worth an essay. I will not now inflict one of mine on you, but I will tell you, as briefly as possible, my present opinion, which you know is contrary to the one I held in the first instance. I am inclined to think that such a change of sentiment is likely to happen to most persons whose views on religious matters undergo a change early in life. The first impulse of a young and ingenuous mind is to withhold the slightest sanction from all that contains even a mixture of supposed error. When the soul is just liberated from the wretched giant's bed of dogmas on which it has been racked and stretched ever since it began to think, there is a feeling of exultation and strong hope. We think we shall run well when we have the full use of our limbs and the bracing air of independence, and we believe that we shall soon obtain something positive which will not only more than compensate us for what we have renounced, but will be so well worth offering to others that we may venture to proselytise as fast as our zeal for truth may prompt us. But a year or two of reflection, and the experience of our own miserable weakness, which will ill afford to part even with the crutch of superstition, must, I think, effect a change. Speculative truth begins to appear but a shadow of individual minds. Agreement between intellects seems unattainable, and we turn to the *truth of feeling* as the only universal bond of union. We find that the intellectual errors which we once fancied were a mere incrustation have grown into

the living body, and that we cannot in the majority of cases wrench them away without destroying vitality. We begin to find that with individuals, as with nations, the only safe revolution is one arising out of the wants which their own progress has generated. It is the quackery of infidelity to suppose that it has a nostrum for all mankind, and to say to all and singular, "Swallow my opinions and you shall be whole." If, then, we are debarred by such considerations from trying to reorganise opinions, are we to remain aloof from our fellow-creatures on occasions when we may fully sympathise with the feelings exercised, although our own have been melted into another mould? Ought we not on every opportunity to seek to have our feelings in harmony, though not in union, with those who are often richer in the fruits of faith, though not in reason, than ourselves? The results of nonconformity in a family are just an epitome of what happens on a larger scale in the world. An influential member chooses to omit an observance which, in the minds of all the rest, is associated with what is highest and most venerable. He cannot make his reasons intelligible, and so his conduct is regarded as a relaxation of the hold that moral ties had on him previously. The rest are infected with the disease they imagine in him. All the screws by which order was maintained are loosened, and in more than one case a person's happiness may be ruined by the confusion of ideas which took the form of principles. But, it may be said, how then are we to do anything towards the advancement of mankind? Are we to go on cherishing superstitions out of a fear that seems inconsistent with any faith in a Supreme Being? I think the best and

the only way of fulfilling our mission is to sow good seed in good (*i. e.*, prepared) ground, and not to root up tares where we must inevitably gather all the wheat with them. We cannot fight and struggle enough for freedom of inquiry, and we need not be idle in imparting all that is pure and lovely to children whose minds are unbespoken. Those who can write, let them do it as boldly as they like, — and let no one hesitate at proper seasons to make a full *con*fession (far better than *pro*fession). St. Paul's reasoning about the conduct of the strong towards the weak, in the 14th and 15th chapters of Romans, is just in point. But I have not said half what I meant to say. There are so many aspects in which the subject might be presented, that it is useless to attempt to exhaust it. I fear I have written very unintelligibly, for it is rather late, and I am so cold that my thoughts are almost frozen.

*After Miss Brabant's marriage to Mr. Charles Hennell, Miss Evans went to stay for a week or two with Dr. Brabant at Devizes, and some time about the beginning of January, 1844, the proposition was made for the transfer of the translation of Strauss from Mrs. Charles Hennell. At the end of April, 1844, Mrs. Bray writes to Miss Sara Hennell that Miss Evans is "working away at Strauss six pages a-day," and the next letter from Miss Evans refers to the beginning of the undertaking.*

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, Sunday, May, 1844.

To begin with business, I send you on the other side the translations you wished (Strauss), but they are perhaps no improvements on what you had done. I shall be very glad to learn from you the particulars as to the mode of publication, — who are the parties that will find the funds, and whether the manuscripts are to be put into the hands of any

one when complete, or whether they are to go directly from me to the publishers? I was very foolish not to imagine about these things in the first instance, but ways and means are always afterthoughts with me.

You will soon be settled and enjoying the blessed spring and summer time. I hope you are looking forward to it with as much delight as I. One has to spend so many years in learning how to be happy. I am just beginning to make some progress in the science, and I hope to disprove Young's theory that "as soon as we have found the key of life, it opes the gates of death." Every year strips us of at least one vain expectation, and teaches us to reckon some solid good in its stead. I never will believe that our youngest days are our happiest. What a miserable augury for the progress of the race and the destination of the individual, if the more matured and enlightened state is the less happy one! Childhood is only the beautiful and happy time in contemplation and retrospect: to the child it is full of deep sorrows, the meaning of which is unknown. Witness colic and whooping-cough and dread of ghosts, to say nothing of hell and Satan, and an offended Deity in the sky, who was angry when I wanted too much plum-cake. Then the sorrows of older persons, which children see but cannot understand, are worse than all. All this to prove that we are happier than when we were seven years old, and that we shall be happier when we are forty than we are now, which I call a comfortable doctrine, and one worth trying to believe! I am sitting with father, who every now and then jerks off my attention to the history of Queen Elizabeth, which he is reading.

*On the 1st July, 1844, there was another little trip with the Brays to the Cumberland Lakes, this time returning by Manchester and Liverpool, and on reaching home about the beginning of August there is the following letter:—*

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, Friday, Aug. 1844.

Can I have the remaining volumes of Strauss, excepting any part that you may choose to keep for your own use? If you could also send me such parts of the introduction and first section as you wish me to look over, I should like to despatch that business at intervals, when I am not inspired for more thorough labour. Thank you for the encouragement you send me. I only need it when my head is weak and I am unable to do much. Then I sicken at the idea of having Strauss in my head and on my hands for a lustrum, instead of saying goodbye to him in a year. When I can work fast I am never weary, nor do I regret either that the work has been begun or that I have undertaken it. I am only inclined to vow that I will never translate again, if I live to correct the sheets for Strauss. My first page is 257.

Pray tell Mrs. C. Hennell that no apology was needed for the very good translation she has sent me. I shall be glad to avail myself of it to the last word, for I am thoroughly tired of my own garb for Strauss's thoughts. I hope the introduction, &c., will be ready by the end of November, when I hope to have put the last words to the first volume. I am awfully afraid of my own translation, and I want you to come and comfort me. I am relapsing into heathen darkness about everything but Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. "Heaven has sent leanness into my soul"—for reviling

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 31st Oct. 1844.

them, I suppose. This lovely autumn! Have you enjoyed its long shadows and fresh breezes?

I do not think it was kind to Strauss (I knew he was handsome) to tell him that a young lady was translating his book. I am sure he must have some twinges of alarm to think he was dependent on that most contemptible specimen of the human being for his English reputation. By the way, I never said that the Canons of the Council of Nice, or the Confession of Augsburg, or even the Thirty-nine Articles, are suggestive of poetry. I imagine no *dogmas* can be. But surely Christianity, with its Hebrew retrospect and millennial hopes, the heroism and divine sorrow of its founder, and all its glorious army of martyrs, might supply and has supplied a strong impulse not only to poetry but to all the Fine Arts. Mr. Pears is coming home from Malvern to-night, and the children are coming to tea with me, so that I have to make haste with my afternoon matters. Beautiful little Susan has been blowing bubbles, and looking like an angel at sport. I am quite happy, only sometimes feeling "the weight of all this unintelligible world."

Letter to Mrs. Bray, end of 1844.

Your books are come for the school, and I have covered them, — at least those that I think you will like for the children; two or three are quite for grown-up people. What an exquisite little thing that is of Harriet Martineau's, — "The Crofton Boys"! I have had some delightful crying over it. There are two or three lines in it that would feed one's soul for a month. Hugh's mother says to him, speaking of people who have permanent sorrow, "They soon had a new and delicious pleasure, which none but the bitterly disappointed can feel,

Letter to Mrs. Bray, Sunday, beginning of 1845.

— the pleasure of rousing their souls to bear pain, and of *agreeing with God silently*, when nobody knows what is in their hearts." I received "Sybil" yesterday quite safely. I am not utterly disgusted with D'Israeli. The man hath good veins, as Bacon would say, but there is not enough blood in them.

*The 17th April this year was an interesting day, as Miss Evans went with the Brays to Atherstone Hall and met Harriet Martineau for the first time. It will be seen that in later years there was considerable intimacy between them.*

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 29th April, 1845.

If you think any of my future manuscript too untidy for the printer, only mark it to that effect, and I will rewrite it, for I do not mind that mechanical work; and my conscience is rather uneasy lest the illegibility of my hand should increase materially the expense of the publication. Do not be alarmed because I am not well just now: I shall be better very soon, and I am not really disgusted with Strauss. I only fancy so sometimes, as I do with all earthly things.

*In June Mrs. Bray writes to Miss Hennell that Miss Evans "looks all the better for her London trip. I never saw her so blooming and buoyant;" but the two next letters show a relapse.*

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, end of June, (?) 1845.

Glad am I that some one can enjoy Strauss! The million certainly will not, and I have ceased to sit down to him with any relish. I should work much better if I had some proof-sheets coming in to assure me that my soul-stupefying labour is not in vain. I am more grateful to you than I can tell you for taking the trouble you do. If it had not been for your in-

terest and encouragement, I should have been almost in despair by this time.

*And again a little later: —*

I begin utterly to despair that Strauss will ever be published, unless I can imitate the Rev. Mr. Davis, and print it myself. At the very best, if we go on according to the rate of procedure hitherto, the book will not be published within the next two years. This seems dolorous enough to me, whose only real satisfaction just now is some hope that I am not sowing the wind. It is very laughable that I should be irritated about a thing in itself so trifling as a translation, but it is the very triviality of the thing that makes delays provoking. The difficulties that attend a really grand undertaking are to be borne, but things should run smoothly and fast when they are not important enough to demand the sacrifice of one's whole soul. The second volume is quite ready. The last few sections were written under anything but favourable circumstances. They are not Strauss's best thoughts, nor are they put into his translator's best language, but I have not courage to imitate Gibbon, — put my work in the fire and begin again.

*In July, 1845, there seems to have arisen some difficulty in getting in the cash subscriptions for the publication. Mr. Charles Hennell and Mr Joseph Parkes, however, exerted themselves in the matter, and £300 was collected, and the following letter shows the relief it was to Miss Evans: —*

Letter to Charles Hennell, Friday evening, July, 1845.

Thank you for sending me the good news so soon, and for sympathising in my need of encouragement. I have all I want now, and shall go forward on buoyant wing.

I am glad for the work's sake, glad for your sake, and glad for " the honourable gentleman's " sake, that matters have turned out so well. Pray think no more of my pens, ink, and paper. I would gladly give much more towards the work than these and my English, if I could do so consistently with duty.

*The book now got into the hands of the printers, as will be seen from the next letter: —*

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, Aug. 1845.

I have just been looking over some of the *revise*, and reading again your sweet letter to me from Hastings, and an impulse of gratitude and love will not let me rest without writing you a little note, though my hand has almost done its possible for the day under this intense heat. You do not guess how much pleasure it gives me to look over your pencillings, — they prove so clearly that you have really entered into the meaning of every sentence, and it always gives one satisfaction to see the evidence of brain-work. I am quite indebted to you for your care, and I feel greatly the advantage of having a friend to undertake the office of critic. There is one word I must mention, — Azazel is the word put in the original of the Old Testament for the scape-goat: now I imagine there is some dubiousness about the meaning, and that Strauss would not think it right to translate *scape-goat,* because, from the tenor of his sentence, he appears to include Azazel with the evil demons. I wonder if it be supposed by any one that Azazel is in any way a distinct being from the goat. I know no Hebrew scholar, and have access to no Hebrew lexicon. Have you asked Mr. Hennell about it?

Your letter describes what I *have* felt rather than what I feel. It seems as if my affections were quietly sinking down to temperate, and I every day seem more and more to value thought rather than feeling. I do not think this is man's best estate, but it is better than what I have sometimes known.

I am not ashamed to confess that I should like to be idle with you for a little while, more than anything else I can think of just now. But alas! leathery brain must work at leathery Strauss for a short time before my butterfly days come. Oh, how I shall spread my wings then! Anent the Greek, it would produce very dreadful cold perspirations indeed in me, if there were anything amounting to a serious error; but this, I trust, there will not be. You must really expect me, if not to sleep and snore *aliquando,* at least to nod in the course of some thousand pages. I should like you to be deliberate over the Schluss Abhandlung. It is the only part on which I have bestowed much pains, for the difficulty was *piquing*, not piquant.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, Friday evening, autumn of 1845.

I am never pained when I think Strauss right, — but in many cases I think him wrong, as every man must be in working out into detail an idea which has general truth, but is only one element in a perfect theory, — not a perfect theory in itself.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, no date, 1845.

I am delighted with the proof. The type and everything else are just what I wished. To see the first sheet is the next best thing to seeing the last, which I hope we shall all have done this time next year. There is a very misty vision of a trip to the Highlands haunting us in this quarter. The vision would be much pleasanter if Sara were one of the images in

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 25th Sept. 1845.

it. You would surely go if we went, and then the thing would be perfect. I long to see you, for you are becoming a sort of transfigured existence, a mere ideal to me, and I have nothing to tell me of your real flesh-and-blood self but sundry very useful little pencil marks, and a scrap of Mrs. Bray's notes now and then. So if you would have me bear in my memory your own self, and not some aerial creation that I call by your name, you must make your appearance.

*In October "the misty vision" took palpable shape, and the Brays, Miss Hennell, and Miss Evans had a delightful fortnight in Scotland, — visiting Loch Lomond and Loch Katrine, the Trossachs, Stirling, Edinburgh, Melrose, and Abbotsford. They were away from the 14th to the 28th, and on returning to Coventry, Strauss was taken up again. Miss Hennell was reading the translation, and aiding with suggestions and corrections. The next letter to her seems to be dated in November.*

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, Nov. 1845.

Please to tell Mr. Hennell that "habits of thought" is not a translation of the word *particularismus*. This does not mean national idiosyncrasy, but is a word which characterises that idiosyncrasy. If he decidedly objects to *particularism*, ask him to be so good as substitute *exclusiveness*, though there is a shade of meaning in *particularismus* which even that does not express. It was because the word could only be translated by a circumlocution that I ventured to anglicise it.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, Tuesday morning, Dec. (?) 1845.

I have been idle, and have not done a stroke to the prefaces, but they shall be sent as soon as possible. Thanks for the copy of the Latin preface and letter. They are in preconceived harmony with my ideas of the appropriate.

I will leave the titlepage to you and Mr. Hennell. Thanks for the news in your last *extra Blatt.* I am glad to find that the theological organs are beginning to deal with philosophy, but I can hardly imagine your writer to be a friend with a false cognisance on his shield. These dear orthodox people talk so simply sometimes, that one cannot help fancying them satirists of their own doctrines and fears, though they mean manfully to fight against the enemy. I should like if possible to throw the emphasis on *critically* in the titlepage. Strauss means it to be so; and yet I do not know how we can put anything better than what you say.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, Dec. 1845.

I send you to-day the conclusion of the chapter you are reading, and, unless you find anything of importance to be rectified, you need not return this to me, but may forward the whole to the printer as soon as you have read it. I am not altogether satisfied with the use of the word " sacrament " as applied specifically to the *Abendmahl.* It seems like a vulgarism to say *the* sacrament for one thing, and for another it does not seem *ab*original enough in the life of Jesus; but I know of no other word that can be substituted. I have altered passover to paschal meal, but τὸ πάσχα is used in the New Testament of the eating of the lamb *par excellence.* You remember in the title of the first section in the Schluss — which I had been so careless as to omit — the expression is " Nothwendiger Uebergang der Kritik in das Dogma." Now Dogmatism will not do, as that would represent *Dogmatismus.* "Dogmatik" is the idea, I believe, — *i. e.*, positive theology. Is it allowable to say *dogmatics*, think you? I do not understand how the want of MS. can be so pressing, as I have only had one proof for the last

fortnight. It seems quite dispiriting to me now not to see the proofs regularly. I have had a miserable week of headache, but am better now, and ready for work, to which I must go.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 1st Jan. 1846.

I do pity you with the drunken Christmas workmen keeping you in this uncomfortable interregnum. But do not go distraught; the spring will really come, and the birds, — many having had to fly across the Atlantic, which is farther than you have to go to establish yourself. I could easily give the meaning of the Hebrew word in question, as I know where to borrow a lexicon. But observe there are two Hebrew words untranslated in this proof. I do not think it will do to give the English in one place and not in another where there is no reason for such a distinction, — and there is not here, for the note in this proof sounds just as fee-fo-fum-ish as the other without any translation. I could not alter the " troublesome," because it is the nearest usable adjective for *schwierig*, which stands in the German. I am tired of inevitable *importants*, and cannot bear to put them when they do not represent the German.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 26th Jan. 1846.

I have been sadly occupied for the last ten days. My father has been ill, and has required much attention, and my own head was very middling for some days, so that I send you but a poor cargo of new MS. Indeed, on looking through the last quire of paper this morning for the purpose of putting in the Greek, it seemed all very poor to me; but the subject is by no means inspiring, and no muse would condescend to visit such an uncertain votary as I have been for the last week or so. How is it that I have only had one proof this week? You know

we are five hundred pages in advance of the printer, so you need not be dreadfully alarmed. I have been so pleased to hear some of your letters read to me, but, alas! I can reflect no pleasure at this moment, for I have a woful pain and am in a desperate hurry.

*On 14th February, 1846, Mrs. Bray writes to Miss Sara Hennell that Miss Evans "says she is Strauss-sick, — it makes her ill dissecting the beautiful story of the Crucifixion, and only the sight of the Christ image* [1] *and picture make her endure it. Moreover, as her work advances nearer its public appearance, she grows dreadfully nervous. Poor thing, I do pity her sometimes, with her pale sickly face and dreadful headaches, and anxiety too about her father. This illness of his has tried her so much, for all the time she had for rest and fresh air she had to read to him. Nevertheless she looks very happy and satisfied sometimes in her work."*

*And about the end of February there is the following letter from Miss Evans: —*

Health and greeting, my Achates, in this veritable spring month. I shall send you a parcel on Monday with 64 new pages of German for your intellectual man. The next parcel, which will be the LAST, I shall send on the Monday following, and when you have read to the end, you may, if you think it desirable, send the whole to me. Your dull ass does not mend his pace for beating; but he *does* mend it when he finds out that he is near his journey's end, and makes you wonder how he could pretend to find all the previous drawing so hard for him. I plead guilty to having set off in a regular scamper; but

**Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, end of Feb. 1846.**

[1] This was a cast, 20 inches high, of Thorwaldsen's grand figure of the risen Christ, which was placed in view in her study at Foleshill, where she did all her work at that time, — a little room on the first floor, with a charming view over the country.

be lenient and do not scold me if you find all sorts of carelessnesses in these last 100 pages.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, later in Feb. 1846.

I have been guilty of the most unpardonable piece of carelessness, for which I am stretched on a rack of anxiety and mortification. In the proof that came on Thursday, I unwittingly drew out a quarter sheet with the blotting-paper, and did not discover the mistake until Saturday morning, when about to correct the last proof. Surely the printer would discover the absence of the four pages and wait for them, — otherwise I would rather have lost one of my fingers or all the hair from my head than have committed such a *faux pas*. For there were three very awkward blunders to be corrected. All this vexation makes a cold and headache doubly intolerable, and I am in a most purgatorial state on this "good Sunday." I shall send the proofs with the unfortunate quarter sheet and an explanation to-night to Mr. Chapman, and prithee do thou enquire and see that the right thing is done. The tears are streaming from my smarting eyes — so farewell.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, March, 1846.

I wish we could get the book out in May, — why not? I suppose the binding could not be all got through, — the printing and writing I should think might be managed in time. Should n't I like to fleet the time away with thee as they did in the Golden Age, — after all our toils to lie reclined on the hills (spiritually), like gods together, careless of mankind. Sooth to speak, idleness, and idleness with thee, is just the most tempting mirage you could raise before my mind's eye, — I say mirage, because I am determined from henceforth to believe in no substantiality for future time, but to live in and love the

present, — of which I have done too little. Still the thought of being with you in your own home will attract me to that future; for without all controversy I love thee and miss thee.

My soul kisses thee, dear Sara, in gratitude for those dewy thoughts of thine in this morning's note. My poor adust soul wants such refreshment. Continue to do me good, — hoping for nothing again. I have had my sister with me all day — an interruption, alas! I cannot write more, but I should not be happy to let the day pass without saying one word to thee.

The last 100 pages have certainly been totally uninteresting to me, considered as matter for translation. Strauss has inevitably anticipated in the earlier part of his work all the principles and many of the details of his criticism, and he seems fagged himself. *Mais courage!* the neck of the difficulty is broken, and there is really very little to be done now. If one's head would but keep in anything like thinking and writing order! Mine has robbed me of half the last fortnight; but I am a little better now, and am saying to myself *Frisch zu!* The Crucifixion and the Resurrection are at all events better than the bursting asunder of Judas. I am afraid I have not made this dull part of Strauss even as tolerable as it might be, for both body and mind have recoiled from it. Thank you, dearest, for all your love and patience for me and with me. I have nothing on earth to complain of but subjective maladies. Father is pretty well, and I have not a single excuse for discontent through the livelong day.

As I believe that even your kindness cannot overcome your sincerity, I will cast aside my fear that your wish to see me in your own home is

rather a plan for my enjoyment than for yours. I believe it would be an unmixed pleasure to me to be your visitor, and one that I would choose among a whole bouquet of agreeable possibilities; so I will indulge myself, and accept the good that the heavens and you offer me. I am miserably in want of you to stir up my soul and make it shake its wings, and begin some kind of flight after something good and noble, for I am in a grovelling, slothful condition, and you are the *only* friend I possess who has an animating influence over me. I have written to Mr. Hennell anent the titlepage, and have voted for *critically examined*, from an entire conviction of its preferableness.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, end of March, 1846.

See what it is to have a person *en rapport* with you, that knows all your thoughts without the trouble of communication! I am especially grateful to you for restoring the "therefore" to its right place. I was about to write to you to get you to remonstrate about this and the "dispassionate calmness," which I did not at all like; but I thought you had corrected the prefaces, as the marks against the Latin looked like yours, so I determined to indulge my *laissez-faire* inclinations, for I hate stickling and debating unless it be for something really important. I do really like reading our Strauss, — he is so *klar und ideenvoll;* but I do not know *one* person who is likely to read the book through, — do you? Next week we will be merry and sad, wise and nonsensical, devout and wicked together.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, beginning of April, 1846.

On 19th April, 1846, Mrs. Bray writes to Miss Hennell that Miss Evans is "as happy as you may imagine at her work being done. She means to come and read Shakspeare through to us as her

first enjoyment." And again, on 27th April, that she "is delighted beyond measure with Strauss's elegant Preface. It is just what she likes. And what a nice letter too! The Latin is quite beyond me, but the letter shows how neatly he can express himself."

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER II

### MARCH, 1841, TO APRIL, 1846

Foleshill — New friends — Mrs. Pears — Coventry life and engagements — Letters to Miss Lewis — Brother's marriage — Mental depression — Reading Nichol's "Architecture of the Heavens and Phenomena of the Solar System" — Makes acquaintance with Mr. and Mrs. Bray — Reads Charles Hennell's Book, "An Inquiry concerning the Origin of Christianity" — Effect of this book — Gives up going to church — Family difficulties — Letters to Mrs. Pears — Visit to Griff — Returns to Foleshill and resumes going to church — Acquaintance with Miss Sara Hennell, and development of friendship with her and Mr. and Mrs. Bray — Letters to Miss Sara Hennell describing mental characteristics — Attitude towards immortality — Death of Miss Mary Hennell — Excursion with the Brays, Mr. Charles Hennell, and Miss Hennell, to Stratford and Malvern, and to Tenby with same party and Miss Brabant — Meets Robert Owen — Studies German and music with Mrs. Bray — Letter to Miss Sara Hennell with important declaration of opinion in regard to conformity — Mr. Charles Hennell's marriage — Stay with Dr. Brabant at Devizes — Arrangement for translation of Strauss's "Leben Jesu" — Excursion with Brays to the Cumberland lakes, returning by Manchester and Liverpool — Weary of Strauss — Letter to Mrs. Bray — Poetry of Christianity — Admiration of Harriet Martineau's "The Crofton Boys" — Trip to London — Despair about publication of Strauss — Subscription of £300 for the work — In better heart — Minutiæ of Strauss translation — Pains taken with the Schluss Abhandlung — Opinion of Strauss's work — The book in print — Trip to the Highlands — Strauss difficulties — Miss Hennell reads the translation and makes suggestions — Suffering from headaches and "Strauss-sick" — The last MS. of the translation sent to Miss Hennell — Joy at finishing — Delighted with Strauss's Preface.

# CHAPTER III

*THE completion of the translation of Strauss is another milestone passed in the life journey of George Eliot, and the comparatively buoyant tone of the letters immediately following makes us feel that the galled neck is out of the yoke for a time. In May, Mrs. Bray had left home on a visit, and the next letter is addressed to her.*

Letter to Mrs. Bray, Sunday (probably about 6th May), 1846.

Do not stay longer than is necessary to do you good, lest I should lose the pleasure of loving you, for my affections are always the warmest when my friends are within an attainable distance. I think I can manage to keep respectably warm towards you for three weeks without seeing you, but I cannot promise more. Tell Mr. Bray I am getting too amiable for this world, and Mr. Donovan's wizard hand would detect a slight corrugation of the skin on my organs 5 and 6:[1] they are so totally without exercise. I had a lecture from Mr. Pears on Friday, as well as a sermon this morning, so you need be in no alarm for my moral health. Do you never think of those Caribs who, by dint of flattening their foreheads, can manage to see perpendicularly above them without so much as lifting their heads? There are some good people who remind me of them. They see everything so clearly and with so little trouble, but at the price of sad self-mutilation.

*On the 26th May, Miss Evans went to pay a visit to Mrs. and Miss Hennell at Hackney, and she writes from*

[1] Organs of Combativeness.

*there to Mrs. Bray, who was expected to join them in London.*

Letter to Mrs. Bray, end of May, 1846.

I cannot deny that I am very happy without you, but perhaps I shall be happier with you, so do not fail to try the experiment. We have been to town only once, and are saving all our strength to "rake" with you; but we are as ignorant as Primitive Methodists about any of the amusements that are going. Please to come in a very mischievous, unconscientious, theatre-loving humour. Everybody I see is very kind to me, and therefore I think them all very charming; and having everything I want, I feel very humble and self-denying. It is only rather too great a bore to have to write to my friends when I am half asleep, and I have not yet reached that pitch of amiability that makes such magnanimity easy. Don't bring us any bad news or any pains, but only nods and becks and wreathèd smiles.

*They staid in London till the 5th June, and on the 15th of that month the translation of Strauss was published. On the 2d July Mrs. Bray writes to Miss Hennell that Miss Evans "is going to Dover with her father for a fortnight." In passing through Dover on our way to the Continent in 1880 after our marriage, we visited the house they staid at in 1846, and my wife then told me that she had suffered a great deal there, as her father's health began to show signs of breaking up. On returning to Coventry there is the following letter referring to Wicksteed's review of the translation of Strauss, which was advertised for the forthcoming number of the "Prospective Review."*

Do you think it worth my while to buy the "Prospective" for the sake of Wicksteed's review, — is

there anything new in it? Do you know if Mr. Chapman has any unusual facilities for obtaining cheap classics? Such things are to be got handsome and second-hand in London, — if one knew but the way. I want to complete Xenophon's works. I have the "Anabasis," and I might perhaps get a nice edition of the "Memorabilia" and "Cyropædia" in a cheaper way than by ordering them directly from our own bookseller. I have been reading the "Fawn of Sertorius." [1] I think you would like it, though the many would not. It is pure, chaste, and classic, beyond any attempt at fiction I ever read. If it be Bulwer's, he has been undergoing a gradual transfiguration, and is now ready to be exalted into the assembly of the saints. The Professor's letter, transmitted through you, gave me infinite consolation, more especially the apt and pregnant quotation from Berosus. Precious those little hidden lakelets of knowledge in the high mountains, far removed from the vulgar eye, only visited by the soaring birds of love.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, Thursday, Aug. (?) 1846.

*On 25th September, 1846, Mrs. Bray writes to Miss Hennell that Miss Evans "looks very brilliant just now. We fancy she must be writing her novel;" and then come the following letters, written in October and November: —*

All the world is bathed in glory and beauty to me now, and thou sharest in the radiance. Tell me whether I live for you as you do for me, and tell me how gods and men are treating you. You must send me a scrap every month, — only a scrap with a dozen words in it, just to prevent me from starving on faith alone, — of which you know I have the minimum

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, Oct. 1846.

[1] Afterwards acknowledged by the author, Robert Landor (brother of Walter Savage Landor), who also wrote the "Fountain of Arethusa," &c.

of endowment. I am sinning against my Daddy by yielding to the strong impulse I felt to write to you, for he looks at me as if he wanted me to read to him.

I do not know whether I can get up any steam again on the subject of Quinet, but I will try, — when Cara comes back, however, for she has run away with "Christianity" into Devonshire, and I must have the book as a springing-board. When does the "Prospective" come out?

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 29th Oct. 1846.

The review of Strauss contains some very just remarks, — though, on the whole, I think it shallow, and in many cases unfair. The praise it gives to the translation is just what I should have wished, — indeed I cannot imagine anything more gratifying in the way of laudation. Is it not droll that Wicksteed should have chosen one of my interpolations, or rather paraphrases, to dilate on? The expression "granite," applied to the sayings of Jesus, is nowhere used by Strauss, but is an impudent addition of mine to eke out his metaphor. Did you notice the review of Foster's Life?[1] I am reading the life, and thinking all the time how you would like it. It is deeply interesting to study the life of a genius under circumstances amid which genius is so seldom to be found. Some of the thoughts in his journal are perfect gems.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 1st Nov. 1846.

*The words of the Reviewer of the Strauss translation in the "Prospective" are worth preserving: "A faithful, elegant, and scholarlike translation. Whoever reads these volumes without any reference to the German must be pleased with the easy, perspicuous, idiomatic, and harmonious force of the English style. But he will be still*

[1] John Foster, Baptist minister, born 1770, died 1843.

*more satisfied when, on turning to the original, he finds that the rendering is word for word, thought for thought, and sentence for sentence. In preparing so beautiful a rendering as the present, the difficulties can have been neither few nor small in the way of preserving, in various parts of the work, the exactness of the translation, combined with that uniform harmony and clearness of style which imparts to the volumes before us the air and spirit of an original. Though the translator never obtrudes himself upon the reader with any notes or comments of his own, yet he is evidently a man who has a familiar knowledge of the whole subject; and if the work be the joint production of several hands, moving in concert, the passages of a specially scholastic character, at least, have received their version from a discerning and well-informed theologian. Indeed Strauss may well say, as he does in the notice which he writes for the English edition, that, as far as he has examined it, the translation is 'et accurata et perspicua.'* "

Many things, both outward and inward, have concurred to make this November far happier than the last. One's thoughts

"Are widened with the process of the suns;"

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, end of Nov. 1846.

and if one is rather doubtful whether one is really wiser or better, it is some comfort to know that the desire to be so is more pure and dominant. I have been thinking of that most beautiful passage in Luke's Gospel, — the appearance of Jesus to the disciples at Emmaus. How universal in its significance! The soul that has hopelessly followed its Jesus, — its impersonation of the highest and best, — all in despondency; its thoughts all refuted, its dreams all dissipated! Then comes another Jesus, — another, but the same, — the same highest and best, only chastened, — crucified instead of triumphant, — and the soul learns that

this is the true way to conquest and glory. And then there is the burning of the heart, which assures that "this was the Lord!" — that this is the inspiration from above, — the true comforter that leads unto truth. But I am not become a Methodist, dear Sara; on the contrary, if I am pious one day, you may be sure I was very wicked the day before, and shall be so again the next.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 20th Dec. 1846.

I have been at Griff for the last week, or I should have written before. I thank you most heartily for sending me "Heliados," — first, because I admire it greatly in itself, and secondly, because it is a pretty proof that I am not dissociated from your most hallowed thoughts. As yet I have read it only once, but I promise myself to read it again and again. I shall not show it to any one, for I hate "friendly criticism," as much for you as for myself; but you have a better spirit than I, and when you come I will render "Heliados" up to you, that others may have the pleasure of reading it.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 18th Feb. 1847.

Lying in bed this morning grievously tormented, your "Heliados" visited me and revealed itself to me more completely than it had ever done before. How true that "it is only when all portions of an individual nature, or all members of society, move forward harmoniously together, that religious progress is calm and beneficial!" I imagine the sorrowful amaze of a child who had been dwelling with delight on the idea that the stars were the pavement of heaven's court, and that there above them sat the kind but holy God, looking like a venerable Father who would smile on his good little ones, — when it was cruelly told, before its mind had substance enough to bear such tension, that the sky was

not real, that the stars were worlds, and that even the sun could not be God's dwelling, because there were many, many suns. These ideas would introduce atheism into the child's mind, instead of assisting it to form a nobler conception of God (of course I am supposing the bare information given, and left to the child to work upon); whereas the idea it previously had of God was perfectly adapted to its intellectual condition, and formed to the child as perfect an embodiment of the all-good, all-wise, and all-powerful as the most enlightened philosopher ever formed to himself.

*On 21st April Miss Evans went to London with the Brays, and, among other things, heard "Elijah" at Exeter Hall. On returning to Coventry she writes: —*

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 30th April, 1847.

I did so long to see you after hearing "Elijah," just to exchange an exclamation of delight. Last night I had a perfect treat, too, in "I Puritani." Castellar was admirable as Elvira, and Gardoni as a seraph. N. B. — I liked the Babel less, — another sign of age.

*Mention has already been made of Miss Mary Sibree (now Mrs. John Cash of Coventry); and as the following genial letter is addressed to her, it gives an opportunity for mentioning here that Miss Evans had a high regard for all the members of the Sibree family. At the end of this year (1847) and the beginning of 1848, there will be found an interesting correspondence with Miss Sibree's brother, Mr. John Sibree, who, in 1849, published a translation of Hegel's Lectures on the Philosophy of History, and in 1880, a volume of poems entitled "Fancy and other Rhymes." The subjoined extract from a communication from Mrs. Cash will show upon what terms Miss Evans was with the family: —*

"*It was in the early part of the year 1841 that Miss*

*Franklin came to see my mother at our house on the Foleshill Road, — about a mile and a half from Coventry, — to tell her, as a piece of most interesting news, that an old pupil, of whom she herself and her sister Rebecca had always been very proud, was coming at the Lady-Day quarter to live at a house on the same road, — within five minutes' walk of ours. This was Miss Evans, then 21 years of age. Miss Franklin dwelt with much pride on Miss Evans's mental power, on her skill in music, &c.; but the great recommendation to my mother's interest was the zeal for others which had marked her earnest piety at school, where she had induced the girls to come together for prayer, and which had led her to visit the poor most diligently in the cottages round her own home. Many years after, an old nurse of mine told me that these poor people had said after her removal, 'We shall never have another Mary Ann Evans.'*

"*My mother was asked to second and help her in work of this kind. 'She will be sure to get something up very soon,' was the last remark I can recall; and on her first visit to us I well remember she told us of a club for clothing, set going by herself and her neighbour Mrs. Pears, in a district to which she said 'the euphonious name of the Pudding-Pits had been given.' It was not until the winter of 1841, or early in 1842, that my mother first received (not from Miss Evans's own lips, but through a mutual friend) the information that a total change had taken place in this gifted woman's mind with respect to the evangelical religion, which she had evidently believed in up to the time of her coming to Coventry, and for which, she once told me, she had at one time sacrificed the cultivation of her intellect, and a proper regard to personal appearance. 'I used,' she said, 'to go about like an owl, to the great disgust of my brother; and I would have denied him what I now see to have been quite lawful amusements.' My mother's grief on hearing of this change in one whom she had begun to love, was very great; but she thought argument and expostulation might do much, and I well remember a long evening devoted to*

*it, but no more of the subject-matter than her indignant refusal to blame the Jews for not seeing in a merely spiritual Deliverer a fulfilment of promises of a temporal one; and a still more emphatic protest against my father's assertion that we had no claim on God. To Miss Evans's affectionate and pathetic speech to my mother, 'Now, Mrs. Sibree, you won't care to have anything more to do with me,' my mother rejoined, 'On the contrary, I shall feel more interested in you than ever.' But it was very evident at this time that she stood in no* need *of sympathising friends: that the desire for congenial society, as well as for books and larger opportunities for culture, which had led her most eagerly to seek a removal from Griff to a home near Coventry, had been met beyond her highest expectations. In Mr. and Mrs. Bray, and in the Hennell family, she had found friends who called forth her interest and stimulated her powers in no common degree. This was traceable even in externals, — in the changed tone of voice and manner, — from formality to a geniality which opened my heart to her, and made the next five years the most important epoch in my life. She gave me (as yet in my teens) weekly lessons in German, speaking freely on all subjects, but with no attempt to directly unsettle my evangelical beliefs, confining herself in these matters to a steady protest against the claim of the Evangelicals to an exclusive possession of higher motives to morality, — or even to religion. Speaking to my mother of her dearest friend, Mrs. Bray, she said, 'She is the most religious person I know.' Of Mr. Charles Hennell, in whose writings she had great interest, she said, 'He is a perfect model of manly excellence.'*

*"On one occasion at Mr. Bray's house at Rosehill, roused by a remark of his on the beneficial influence exercised by evangelical beliefs on the moral feelings, she said energetically, 'I say it now, and I say it once for all, that I am influenced in my own conduct at the present time by far higher considerations, and by a nobler idea of duty, than I ever was while I held the evangelical beliefs.' When at length, after my brother's year's resi-*

*dence at the Halle University (in 1842–43), my own mind having been much exercised in the matter of religion, I felt the moral difficulties press heavily on my conscience, and my whole heart was necessarily poured out to my 'Guide, Philosopher, and Friend,' the steady turning of my attention from theoretical questions to a confession of my own want of thoroughness in arithmetic, which I pretended to teach; and the request that I would specially give attention to this study and get my conscience clear about it, and that I would not come to her again until my views of religion were also clear, is too characteristic of Miss Evans, as I knew her during those years, and too much in harmony with the moral teaching of George Eliot, to be omitted in reminiscences by one to whom that wholesome advice proved a turning-point in life. Two things more I cannot omit to mention: one, the heightened sense given to me by her of the duty of making conversation profitable, and in general of using time for serious purposes, — of the positive immorality of frittering it away in ill-natured or in poor, profitless talk; another, the debt (so frequently acknowledged by Miss Evans to me) which she owed, during the years of her life with her father, to the intercourse she enjoyed with her friends at Rosehill. Mr. and Mrs. Bray and Miss Hennell, with their friends, were* her *world, — and on my saying to her once, as we closed the garden door together, that we seemed to be entering a Paradise, she said, 'I do indeed feel that I shut the world out when I shut that door.' It is consoling to me now to feel that in her terrible suffering through her father's illness and death, which were most trying to witness, she had such alleviations.*"

Letter to Miss Mary Sibree, 10th May, 1847

It is worth while to forget a friend for a week or ten days, just for the sake of the agreeable kind of startle it gives one to be reminded that one has such a treasure in reserve, — the same sort of pleasure, I suppose, that a poor body feels who happens to lay his hand on an undreamt of sixpence which had sunk to a corner

of his pocket. When Mr. Sibree brought me your parcel, I had been to London for a week; and having been full of Mendelssohn oratorios and Italian operas, I had just this kind of delightful surprise when I saw your note and the beautiful purse. Not that I mean to compare you to a sixpence, — you are a bright golden sovereign to me, with edges all unrubbed, fit to remind a poor, tarnished, bruised piece like me, that there are ever fresh and more perfect coinages of human nature forthcoming. I am very proud of my purse, — first, because I have long had to be ashamed of drawing my old one out of my pocket; and secondly, because it is a sort of symbol of your love for me, — and who is not proud to be loved? For there is a beautiful kind of pride at which no one need frown, — I may call it a sort of impersonal pride, — a thrill of exultation at all that is good and lovely and joyous as a possession of our human nature.

I am glad to think of all your pleasure among friends new and old. Mrs. D.'s mother is, I daresay, a valuable person; but do not, I beseech thee, go to old people as oracles on matters which date any later than their thirty-fifth year. Only trust them, if they are good, in those practical rules which are the common property of long experience. If they are governed by one special idea which circumstances or their own mental bias have caused them to grasp with peculiar firmness, and to work up into original forms, make yourself master of their thoughts and convictions, the residuum of all that long travail which poor mortals have to encounter in their threescore years and ten, but do not trust their application of their gathered wisdom; for however just old people may be in their *principles* of judgment, they are often wrong in

their application of them from an imperfect or unjust conception of the matter to be judged. Love and cherish and venerate the old; but never imagine that a worn-out, dried-up organisation can be so rich in inspiration as one which is full fraught with life and energy. I am not talking like one who is superlatively jealous for the rights of the old; yet such I am, I assure thee. I heard Mendelssohn's new oratorio "Elijah" when I was in London. It has been performed four times in Exeter Hall to as large an audience as the building would hold, — Mendelssohn himself the conductor. It is a glorious production, and altogether I look upon it as a kind of sacramental purification of Exeter Hall, and a proclamation of indulgence for all that is to be perpetrated there during this month of May. This is a piece of impiety which you may expect from a lady who has been guanoing her mind with French novels. This is the impertinent expression of D'Israeli, who, writing himself much more detestable stuff than ever came from a French pen, can do nothing better to bamboozle the unfortunates who are seduced into reading his "Tancred" than speak superciliously of all other men and things, — an expedient much more successful in some quarters than one would expect. But *au fond*, dear Mary, I have no impiety in my mind at this moment, and my soul heartily responds to your rejoicing that society is attaining a more perfect idea and exhibition of Paul's exhortation, — "Let the same mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." I believe the Amen to this will be uttered more and more fervently, "Among all posterities for ever more."

Ask me not why I have never written all this weary time. I can only answer, "All things are

full of labour, — man cannot utter it," — *et seq.* See the 1st chapter of Ecclesiastes for my experience.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 15th June, 1847.

I have read the "Inquiry" again with more than interest, — with delight and high admiration. My present impression from it far surpasses the one I had retained from my two readings about five years ago. With the exception of a few expressions which seem too little discriminating in the introductory sketch, there is nothing in its whole tone from beginning to end that jars on my moral sense; and apart from any opinion of the book as an explanation of the existence of Christianity and the Christian documents, I am sure that no one, fit to read it at all, could read it without being intellectually and morally stronger, — the reasoning is so close, the induction so clever, the style so clear, vigorous, and pointed, and the animus so candid and even generous. Mr. Hennell ought to be one of the happiest of men that he has done such a life's work. I am sure if I had written such a book, I should be invulnerable to all the arrows of all spiteful gods and goddesses. I should say, "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself," seeing that I have delivered such a message of God to men. The book is full of *wit* to me. It gives me that exquisite kind of laughter which comes from the gratification of the reasoning faculties. For instance: "If some of those who were actually at the mountain doubted whether they saw Jesus or not, we may reasonably doubt whether he was to be seen at all there: especially as the words attributed to him do not seem at all likely to have been said, from the disciples paying no attention to them." "The disciples considered her

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 16th Sept. 1847.

[Mary Magdalene's] words idle tales, and believed them not." We have thus their example for considering her testimony alone as insufficient, and for seeking further evidence. To say "Jewish philosopher" seems almost like saying a round square: yet those two words appear to me the truest description of Jesus. I think the "Inquiry" furnishes the utmost that can be done towards obtaining a *real* view of the life and character of Jesus, by rejecting as little as possible from the Gospels. I confess that I should call many things "shining ether," to which Mr. Hennell allows the solid angularity of facts; but I think he has thoroughly worked out the problem, — subtract from the New Testament the miraculous and highly improbable, and what will be the remainder?

*At the end of September Miss Evans and her father went for a little trip to the Isle of Wight, and on their return there is the following letter: —*

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 13th Oct. 1847.

I heartily wish you had been with me to see all the beauties which have gladdened my soul, and made me feel that this earth is as good a heaven as I ought to dream of. I have a much greater respect for the Isle of Wight, now I have seen it, than when I knew it only by report, — a compliment which one can seldom very sincerely pay to things and people that one has heard puffed and bepraised. I do long for you to see Alum Bay. Fancy a very high precipice, the strata upheaved perpendicularly in rainbow-like streaks of the brightest maize, violet, pink, blue, red, brown, and brilliant white, worn by the weather into fantastic fretwork, the deep blue sky above, and the glorious sea below. It seems an enchanted land, where the earth is of more delicate,

refined materials than this dingy planet of ours is wrought out of. You might fancy the strata formed of the compressed pollen of flowers, or powder from bright insects. You can think of nothing but Calypsos, or Prosperos and Ariels, and such like beings.

I find one very great spiritual good attendant on a quiet meditative journey among fresh scenes. I seem to have removed to a distance from myself when I am away from the petty circumstances that make up my ordinary environment. I can take myself up by the ears and inspect myself like any other queer monster on a small scale. I have had many thoughts, especially on a subject that I should like to work out, — "The superiority of the consolations of philosophy to those of (so-called) religion." Do you stare?

Thank you for putting me on reading Sir Charles Grandison. I have read five volumes, and am only vexed that I have not the two last on my table at this moment, that I might have them for my *convives*. I had no idea that Richardson was worth so much. I have had more pleasure from him than from all the Swedish novels together. The morality is perfect, — there is nothing for the new lights to correct.

How do you like "Lélia," of which you have never spoken one word? I am provoked with you for being in the least pleased with "Tancred;" but if you have found out any lofty meaning in it, or any true picturing of life, tell it me, and I will recant. I have found two new readers of Strauss. One a lady at Leamington, who is also reading the "Inquiry," but likes Strauss better! The other is a gentleman here in Coventry; he says "it is most clever and

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 27th Nov. 1847.

ingenious, and that no one whose faith rests only on the *common* foundation can withstand it." I think he may safely say that his faith rests on an *un*common foundation. The book will certainly give him a lift in the right direction from its critical, logical character, — just the opposite of his own. I was interested the other day in talking to a young lady who lives in a nest of clergymen, her brothers, but not of the evangelical school. She had been reading Blanco White's life, and seems to have had her spirits stirred within her, as every one's must be who reads the book with any power of appreciation. She is unable to account to herself for the results at which Blanco White arrived with his earnestness and love of truth; and she asked me if I had come to the same conclusions.

I think "Live and teach" should be a proverb as well as "Live and learn." We must teach either for good or evil; and if we use our inward light as the Quaker tells us, always taking care to feed and trim it well, our teaching must in the end be for good. We are growing old together, — are we not? I am growing happier too. I am amusing myself with thinking of the prophecy of Daniel as a sort of allegory. All those monstrous, "rombustical" beasts with their horns, — the horn with eyes and a mouth speaking proud things, and the little horn that waxed rebellious and stamped on the stars, seem like my passions and vain fancies, which are to be knocked down one after the other, — until all is subdued into a universal kingdom over which the Ancient of Days presides, — the spirit of love, — the Catholicism of the Universe, if you can attach any meaning to such a phrase. It *has* a meaning for my sage noddle.

I am reading George Sand's "Lettres d'un

Voyageur" with great delight, and hoping that they will some time do you as much good as they do me. In the meantime, I think the short letter about "Lélia" will interest you. It has a very deep meaning to my apprehension. You can send back the pages when you have duly digested them. I once said of you that yours was a sort of alkali nature, which would detect the slightest acid of falsehood. You began to phiz-zz directly it approached you. I want you as a test. I now begin to see the necessity of the arrangement (a bad word) that love should determine people's fate while they are young. It is so impossible to admire — "*s'enthousiasmer*" of — an *individual* as one gets older.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, Jan. 1848.

*Here follows the interesting correspondence, referred to before, with Mr. John Sibree.*

Begin your letter by abusing me according to my example. There is nothing like a little gunpowder for a damp chimney; and an explosion of that sort will set the fire of your ideas burning to admiration. I hate bashfulness and modesties, as Sir Hugh Evans would say; and I warn you that I shall make no apologies, though from my habit of writing only to people who, rather than have nothing from me, will tolerate nothings, I shall be very apt to forget that you are not one of those amiably silly individuals. I must write to you *more meo,* without taking pains or labouring to be *spirituelle* when heaven never meant me to be so; and it is your own fault if you bear with my letters a moment after they become an infliction. I am glad you detest Mrs. Hannah More's letters. I like neither her letters, nor her books, nor her character. She was

Letter to J. Sibree, beginning of 1848.

that most disagreeable of all monsters, a blue stocking, — a monster that can only exist in a miserably false state of society, in which a woman with but a smattering of learning or philosophy is classed along with singing mice and card-playing pigs. It is some time since I read "Tancred," so that I have no very vivid recollection of its details; but I thought it very "thin," and inferior in the working up to "Coningsby," and "Sybil." Young Englandism is almost as remote from my sympathies as Jacobitism, as far as its force is concerned, though I love and respect it as an effort on behalf of the people. D'Israeli is unquestionably an able man, and I always enjoy his tirades against liberal principles as opposed to popular principles, — the name by which he distinguishes his own. As to his theory of races, it has not a leg to stand on, and can only be buoyed up by such windy eloquence as, — You chubby-faced, squabby-nosed Europeans owe your commerce, your arts, your religion, to the Hebrews, — nay, the Hebrews lead your armies: in proof of which he can tell us that Masséna, a second-rate general of Napoleon's, was a Jew, whose real name was Manasseh. Extermination up to a certain point seems to be the law for the inferior races, — for the rest fusion both for physical and moral ends. It appears to me that the law by which privileged classes degenerate from continual intermarriage, must act on a larger scale in deteriorating whole races. The nations have been always kept apart until they have sufficiently developed their idiosyncrasies, and then some great revolutionary force has been called into action, by which the genius of a particular nation becomes a portion of the common mind of humanity. Looking at the matter

æsthetically, our idea of beauty is never formed on the characteristics of a single race. I confess the types of the pure races, however handsome, always impress me disagreeably; there is an undefined feeling that I am looking not at *man*, but at a specimen of an order under Cuvier's class Bimana. The negroes certainly puzzle me. All the other races seem plainly destined to extermination, not excepting even the Hebrew Caucasian. But the negroes are too important, physiologically and geographically, for one to think of their extermination; while the repulsion between them and the other races seems too strong for fusion to take place to any great extent. On one point I heartily agree with D'Israeli as to the superiority of the oriental races, — their clothes are beautiful and their manners are agreeable. Did you not think the picture of the Barroni family interesting? I should like to know who are the originals. The fellowship of race, to which D'Israeli so exultingly refers the munificence of Sidonia, is so evidently an inferior impulse, which must ultimately be superseded, that I wonder even he, Jew as he is, dares to boast of it. My Gentile nature kicks most resolutely against any assumption of superiority in the Jews, and is almost ready to echo Voltaire's vituperation. I bow to the supremacy of Hebrew poetry, but much of their early mythology, and almost all their history, is utterly revolting. Their stock has produced a Moses and a Jesus; but Moses was impregnated with Egyptian philosophy, and Jesus is venerated and adored by us only for that wherein He transcended or resisted Judaism. The very exaltation of their idea of a national deity into a spiritual monotheism seems to have been borrowed from the other oriental

tribes. Everything specifically Jewish is of a low grade.

And do you really think that sculpture and painting are to die out of the world? If that be so, let another deluge come as quickly as possible, that a new race of Glums and Gowries may take possession of this melancholy earth. I agree with you as to the inherent superiority of music, — as that questionable woman, the Countess Hahn-Hahn, says painting and sculpture are but an idealising of our actual existence. Music arches over this existence with another and a diviner. Amen, too, to that *ideenvoll* observation of Hegel's, — "We hardly know what it is to feel for human misery until we have heard a shriek: and a more perfect hell might be made out of sound than out of any preparation of fire and brimstone." When the tones of our voice have betrayed peevishness or harshness, we seem to be doubly haunted by the ghost of our sin: we are doubly conscious that we have been untrue to our part in the great Handel chorus. But I cannot assent to the notion that music is to supersede the other arts, or that the highest minds must necessarily aspire to a sort of Milton blindness, in which the *tiefste der Sinne* is to be a substitute for all the rest. I cannot recognise the truth of all that is said about the necessity of religious fervour to high art. I am sceptical as to the real existence of such fervour in any of the greatest artists. Artistic power seems to me to resemble dramatic power, — to be an intimate perception of the varied states of which the human mind is susceptible, with ability to give them out anew in intensified expression. It is true that the older the world gets, originality becomes less possible. Great subjects are used up, and civilisation

tends evermore to repress individual predominance, highly wrought agony, or ecstatic joy. But all the gentler emotions will be ever new, ever wrought up into more and more lovely combinations, and genius will probably take their direction.

Have you ever seen a head of Christ taken from a statue by Thorwaldsen of Christ scourged? If not, I think it would almost satisfy you. There is another work of his, said to be very sublime, of the Archangel waiting for the command to sound the last trumpet. Yet Thorwaldsen came at the fag end of time.

I am afraid you despise landscape painting; but to me even the works of our own Stanfield and Roberts and Creswick bring a whole world of thought and bliss, — "a sense of something far more deeply interfused." The ocean and the sky and the everlasting hills are spirit to me, and they will never be robbed of their sublimity.

I have tired myself with trying to write cleverly, *invitâ Minervâ*, and having in vain endeavoured to refresh myself by turning over Lavater's queer sketches of physiognomies, and still queerer judgments on them, it is a happy thought of mine that I have a virtuous reason for spending my *ennui* on you.

I send you a stanza I picked up the other day in George Sand's "Lettres d'un Voyageur," which is almost the ultimatum of human wisdom on the question of human sorrow: —

> "Le bonheur et le malheur,
> Nous viennent du même auteur,
> Voilà la *ressemblance*.
> Le bonheur nous rend heureux,
> Et le malheur malheureux,
> Voilà la différence."

Ah, here comes a cup of coffee to console me! When I have taken it, I will tell you what George Sand says: " Sais tu bien que tout est dit devant Dieu et devant les hommes quand l'homme infortuné demande compte de ses maux et qu'il obtient cette réponse? Qu'y a-t-il de plus? Rien." But I am not a mocking pen, and if I were talking to you instead of writing, you would detect some falsity in the ring of my voice. Alas! the atrabiliar patient you describe is first cousin to me in my very worst moods, but I have a profound faith that the serpent's head will be bruised. This conscious kind of false life that is ever and anon endeavouring to form itself within us, and eat away our true life, will be overcome by continued accession of vitality, by our perpetual increase in " quantity of existence," as Foster calls it. Creation is the superadded life of the intellect: sympathy, all-embracing love, the superadded moral life. These given more and more abundantly, I feel that all the demons, which are but my own egotism mopping and mowing and gibbering, would vanish away, and there would be no place for them, —

> " For every gift of noble origin
> Is breathed upon by hope's perpetual breath."

Evils, even sorrows, are they not all negations? Thus matter is in a perpetual state of decomposition, — superadd the principle of life, and the tendency to decomposition is overcome. Add to this consciousness, and there is a power of self-amelioration. The passions and senses decompose, so to speak. The intellect by its analytic power restrains the fury with which they rush to their own destruction; the moral nature purifies, beautifies, and at length transmutes them. But to whom am I

talking? You know far more *sur ce chapitre* than I.

Every one talks of himself or herself to me, and I beg you will follow every one's example in this one thing only. Individuals are precious to me in proportion as they unfold to me their intimate selves. I have just had lent me the journal of a person who died some years ago. When I was less venerable I should have felt the reading of such a thing insupportable; now it interests me, though it is the simplest record of events and feelings.

Mary says she has told you about Mr. Dawson and his lecture, — miserably crude and mystifying in some parts, but with a few fine passages. He is a very delightful man, but not (at least so say my impressions) a great man. How difficult it is to be great in this world where there is a tariff for spiritualities as well as for beeves and cheese and tallow! It is scarcely possible for a man simply to give out his true inspiration, — the real profound conviction which he has won by hard wrestling, or the few and far-between pearls of imagination: he must go on talking or writing by rote, or he must starve. Would it not be better to take to tent-making with Paul, or to spectacle-making with Spinoza?

Write and tell you that I join you in your happiness about the French Revolution? Very fine, my good friend. If I made you wait for a letter as long as you do me, our little *échantillon* of a millennium would be over: Satan would be let loose again; and I should have to share your humiliation instead of your triumph.

Letter to J. Sibree, Feb. 1848.

Nevertheless I absolve you, for the sole merit of

thinking rightly (that is, of course, just as I do) about *la grande nation* and its doings. You and Carlyle (have you seen his article in last week's "Examiner"?) are the only two people who feel just as I would have them, — who can glory in what is actually great and beautiful without putting forth any cold reservations and incredulities to save their credit for wisdom. I am all the more delighted with your enthusiasm because I did n't expect it. I feared that you lacked revolutionary ardour. But no, — you are just as *sansculottish* and rash as I would have you. You are not one of those sages whose reason keeps so tight a rein on their emotions that they are too constantly occupied in calculating consequences to rejoice in any great manifestation of the forces that underlie our every-day existence. I should have written a soprano to your Jubilate the very next day, but that, lest I should be exalted above measure, a messenger of Satan was sent in the form of a headache, and directly on the back of that a faceache, so that I have been a mere victim of sensations, memories, and visions for the last week. I am even now, as you may imagine, in a very shattered, limbo-like mental condition.

I thought we had fallen on such evil days that we were to see no really great movement, — that ours was what St. Simon calls a purely critical epoch, not at all an organic one; but I begin to be glad of my date. I would consent, however, to have a year clipt off my life for the sake of witnessing such a scene as that of the men of the barricades bowing to the image of Christ, "who first taught fraternity to men." One trembles to look into every fresh newspaper lest there should be something to mar the picture; but hitherto even

the scoffing newspaper critics have been compelled into a tone of genuine respect for the French people and the Provisional Government. Lamartine can act a poem if he cannot write one of the very first order. I hope that beautiful face given to him in the pictorial newspaper is really his: it is worthy of an aureolel. I am chiefly anxious about Albert, the operative, but his picture is not to be seen. I have little patience with people who can find time to pity Louis Philippe and his moustachioed sons. Certainly our decayed monarchs should be pensioned off; we should have a hospital for them, or a sort of zoological garden, where these worn-out humbugs may be preserved. It is but justice that we should keep them, since we have spoiled them for any honest trade. Let them sit on soft cushions, and have their dinner regularly, but, for heaven's sake, preserve me from sentimentalising over a pampered old man when the earth has its millions of unfed souls and bodies. Surely he is not so Ahab-like as to wish that the revolution had been deferred till his son's days; and I think the shades of the Stuarts would have some reason to complain if the Bourbons, who are so little better than they, had been allowed to reign much longer.

I should have no hope of good from any imitative movement at home. Our working-classes are eminently inferior to the mass of the French people. In France the *mind* of the people is highly electrified; they are full of ideas on social subjects; they really desire social *reform*, — not merely an acting out of Sancho Panza's favourite proverb, "Yesterday for you, to-day for me." The revolutionary animus extended over the whole nation, and embraced the rural population, — not

merely, as with us, the artisans of the towns. Here there is so much larger a proportion of selfish radicalism and unsatisfied brute sensuality (in the agricultural and mining districts especially) than of perception or desire of justice, that a revolutionary movement would be simply destructive, not constructive. Besides, it would be put down. Our military have no notion of "fraternising." They have the same sort of inveteracy as dogs have for the ill-drest *canaille*. They are as mere a brute force as a battering-ram; and the aristocracy have got firm hold of them. And there is nothing in our Constitution to obstruct the slow progress of *political* reform. This is all we are fit for at present. The social reform which may prepare us for great changes is more and more the object of effort both in Parliament and out of it. But we English are slow crawlers. The sympathy in Ireland seems at present only of the water-toast kind. The Glasgow riots are more serious; but one cannot believe in a Scotch Reign of Terror in these days. I should not be sorry to hear that the Italians had risen *en masse*, and chased the odious Austrians out of beautiful Lombardy. But this they could hardly do without help, and that involves another European war.

Concerning the "tent-making," there is much more to be said, but am I to adopt your rule and never speak of what I suppose we agree about? It is necessary to me, not simply to *be* but to *utter*, and I require utterance of my friends. What is it to me that I think the same thoughts? I think them in a somewhat different fashion. No mind that has any *real* life is a mere echo of another. If the perfect unison comes occasionally, as in music, it enhances the harmonies. It is like a diffusion

or expansion of one's own life, to be assured that its vibrations are repeated in another, and words are the media of those vibrations. Is not the universe itself a perpetual utterance of the one Being? So I say again, utter, utter, utter, and it will be a deed of mercy twice blest, for I shall be a safety-valve for your communicativeness, and prevent it from splitting honest people's brains who don't understand you; and, moreover, it will be fraught with ghostly comfort to me.

Letter to J. Sibree, Sunday evening, later in 1848.

I might make a very plausible excuse for not acknowledging your kind note earlier, by telling you that I have been both a nurse and invalid; but to be thoroughly ingenuous, I must confess that all this would not have been enough to prevent my writing but for my chronic disease of utter idleness. I have heard and thought of you with great interest, however. You have my hearty and not inexperienced sympathy; for, to speak in the style of Jonathan Oldbuck, I am *haud ignara mali*. I have gone through a trial of the same genus as yours, though rather differing in species. I sincerely rejoice in the step you have taken; it is an absolutely necessary condition for any true development of your nature. It was impossible to think of your career with hope, while you tacitly subscribed to the miserable *etiquette* (it deserves no better or more spiritual name) of sectarianism. Only persevere, — be true, firm, and loving, — not too anxious about immediate usefulness to others, — that can only be a result of justice to yourself. Study mental hygiene. Take long doses of *dolce far niente*, and be in no great hurry about anything in this 'varsal world! Do we not commit ourselves to sleep, and so resign all care for our-

selves every night, lay ourselves gently on the bosom of nature or God? A beautiful reproach to the spirit of some religionists and ultra-good people!

I like the notion of your going to Germany as good in every way, for yourself, body and mind, and for all others. Oh the bliss of having a very high attic in a romantic Continental town, such as Geneva, — far away from morning-callers, dinners, and decencies, and then to pause for a year and think *de omnibus rebus et quibusdam aliis*, and then to return to life, and work for poor stricken humanity, and never think of self again![1]

I am writing nearly in the dark, with the post-boy waiting. I fear I shall not be at home when you come home, but surely I shall see you before you leave England. However that may be, I shall utter a genuine *Lebewohl.*

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 1st Feb. 1848.

In my view there are but two kinds of *regular* correspondence possible, — one of simple affection, which gives a picture of all the details, painful and pleasurable, that a loving heart pines after, and this we carry on through the medium of Cara; or one purely moral and intellectual, carried on for the sake of ghostly edification, in which each party has to put salt on the tails of all sorts of ideas on all sorts of subjects, in order to send a weekly or fortnightly packet, as so much duty and self-castigation. I have always been given to understand that such Lady-Jane-Grey-like works were your abhorrence. However, let me know what you *would* like, — what would make you continue to hold me in loving remembrance or convince you that you are a

[1] An *Ahnung* — a presentiment — of her own future.

bright evergreen in my garden of pleasant plants. Behold me ready to tear off my right hand or pluck out my right eye (metaphorically, of course, — I speak to an experienced exegetist, *comme dirait notre* Strauss), or write reams of letters full of interesting falsehoods or very dull truths. We have always concluded that our correspondence should be of the *third* possible kind, — one of impulse, which is necessarily irregular as the Northern lights.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 14th April, 1848.

I am a miserable wretch, with aching limbs and sinking spirits, but still alive enough to feel the kindness of your last note. I thoroughly enjoyed your delight in Emerson. I should have liked to see you sitting by him " with awful eye," for once in your life feeling all the bliss of veneration. I am quite uncertain about our movements. Dear father gets on very slowly, if at all. You will understand the impossibility of my forming any plans for my own pleasure. Rest is the only thing I can think of with pleasure now.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 20th April, 1848.

Dear father is so decidedly progressing towards recovery that I am full of quiet joy, — a gentle dawning light after the moonlight of sorrow. I have found already some of the " sweet uses " that belong only to what is called trouble, which is, after all, only a deepened gaze into life, like the sight of the darker blue and the thickening host of stars when the hazy effect of twilight is gone, — as our dear Blanco White said of death. I shall have less time than I have had at my own disposal probably; but I feel prepared to accept life, nay, lovingly to embrace it in any form in which it shall present itself.

*Sometime in May, Mr. Evans and his daughter went to St. Leonards, and remained there till near the end of June. His mortal illness had now taken hold of him, and this was a depressing time both for him and for her, as will be seen from the following letters: —*

Letter to Chas. Bray, May, 1848.

Your words of affection seem to make this earthly atmosphere sit less heavily on my shoulders, and in gratitude I must send you my thanks before I begin to read of Henry Gow and Fair Catharine for father's delectation. In truth, I have found it somewhat difficult to live for the last week, — conscious all the time that the only additions to my lot worth having must be more strength to love in my own nature; but perhaps this very consciousness has an irritating rather than a soothing effect. I have a fit of sensitiveness upon me, which after all is but egotism and mental idleness. The enthusiasm without which one cannot even pour out breakfast well (at least *I* cannot), has forsaken me. You may laugh and wonder when my enthusiasm has displayed itself, but that will only prove that you are no seer. I can never live long without it in some form or other. I possess my soul in patience for a time, believing that this dark, damp vault in which I am groping will soon come to an end, and the fresh green earth and the bright sky be all the more precious to me. But for the present my address is Grief Castle, on the River of Gloom, in the Valley of Dolour. I was amused to find that Castle Campbell in Scotland was called so. Truly for many seasons in my life I should have been an appropriate denizen of such a place; but I have faith that unless I am destined to insanity, I shall never again abide long in that same castle. I heartily say Amen to your dictum about the

cheerfulness of "large moral regions." Where *thought* and *love* are active, — thought the formative power, love the vitalising, — there can be no sadness. They are in themselves a more intense and extended participation of a divine existence. As they grow, the highest species of faith grows too, and all things are possible. I don't know why I should prose in this way to you. But I wanted to thank you for your note, and all this selfish grumbling was at my pen's end. And now I have no time to redeem myself. We shall not stay long away from home, I feel sure.

Letter to Chas. Bray, 31st May, 1848.

Father has done wonders in the way of walking and eating, — for him, — but he makes not the slightest attempt to amuse himself, so that I scarcely feel easy in following my own bent even for an hour. I have told you everything now, except that I look amiable in spite of a strong tendency to look black, and speak gently, though with a strong propensity to be snappish. Pity me, ye happier spirits that look amiable and speak gently, because ye *are* amiable and gentle.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 4th June, 1848.

Alas for the fate of poor mortals which condemns them to wake up some fine morning and find all the poetry in which their world was bathed, only the evening before, utterly gone! — the hard, angular world of chairs and tables and looking-glasses staring at them in all its naked prose! It is so in all the stages of life: the poetry of girlhood goes, — the poetry of love and marriage, — the poetry of maternity, — and at last the very poetry of duty forsakes us for a season, and we see ourselves, and all about us, as nothing more than miserable agglomerations of atoms, — poor tentative efforts of

the *Natur Princip* to mould a personality. This is the state of prostration, — the self-abnegation through which the soul must go, and to which perhaps it must again and again return, that its poetry or religion, which is the same thing, may be a real ever flowing river, fresh from the windows of heaven and the fountains of the great deep, — not an artificial basin, with grotto-work and gold-fish. I feel a sort of madness growing upon me, — just the opposite of the delirium which makes people fancy that their bodies are filling the room. It seems to me as if I were shrinking into that mathematical abstraction, a point. But I am wasting this "good Sunday morning" in grumblings.

Poor Louis Blanc! The newspapers make me melancholy; but shame upon me that I say "poor." The day will come when there will be a temple of white marble, where sweet incense and anthems shall rise to the memory of every man and woman who has had a deep *Ahnung*, a presentiment, a yearning, or a clear vision of the time when this miserable reign of Mammon shall end, — when men shall be no longer "like the fishes of the sea," — society no more like a face one half of which — the side of profession, of lip-faith — is fair and God-like, the other half — the side of deeds and institutions — with a hard old wrinkled skin puckered into the sneer of a Mephistopheles. I worship the man who has written as the climax of his appeal against society, "L'inégalité des talents *doit aboutir* non à l'inégalité des retributions mais à l'inégalité des devoirs." You will wonder what has wrought me up into this fury. It is the loathsome fawning, the transparent hypocrisy, the systematic

Letter to Chas. Bray, 8th June, 1848.

giving as little as possible for as much as possible, that one meets with here at every turn. I feel that society is training men and women for hell.

All creatures about to moult, or to cast off an old skin, or enter on any new metamorphosis, have sickly feelings. It was so with me. But now I am set free from the irritating worn-out integument. I am entering on a new period of my life, which makes me look back on the past as something incredibly poor and contemptible. I am enjoying repose, strength, and ardour in a greater degree than I have ever known, and yet I never felt my own insignificance and imperfection so completely. My heart bleeds for dear father's pains, but it is blessed to be at hand to give the soothing word and act needed. I should not have written this description of myself but that I felt your affectionate letter demanded some I-ism, which, after all, is often humility rather than pride. Paris, poor Paris — alas! alas!

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 23d June, 1848.

I have read "Jane Eyre," and shall be glad to know what you admire in it. All self-sacrifice is good, but one would like it to be in a somewhat nobler cause than that of a diabolical law which chains a man soul and body to a putrefying carcase. However the book *is* interesting; only I wish the characters would talk a little less like the heroes and heroines of police reports.

Letter to Chas. Bray, June, 1848.

*About the beginning of July Miss Evans and her father returned to Coventry; and the 13th July was a memorable day, as Emerson came to visit the Brays, and she went with them to Stratford. All she says herself about it is in this note.*

I have seen Emerson, — the first *man* I have ever seen. But you have seen still more of him, so I need not tell you what he is. I shall leave Cara to tell how the day — the Emerson day — was spent, for I have a swimming head from hanging over the desk to write business letters for father. Have you seen the review of Strauss's pamphlet in the "Edinburgh"? The title is "Der Romantiker auf dem Throne der Cäsaren, oder Julian der Abtrünnige," — a sort of erudite satire on the King of Prussia; but the reviewer pronounces it to have a permanent value quite apart from this fugitive interest. The "Romantiker," or Romanticist, is one who, in literature, in the arts, in religion or politics, endeavours to revive the dead past. Julian was a romanticist in wishing to restore the Greek religion and its spirit, when mankind had entered on the new development. But you have very likely seen the review. I must copy one passage, translated from the conclusion of Strauss's pamphlet, lest you should not have met with it. "Christian writers have disfigured the death-scene of Julian. They have represented him as furious, blaspheming, despairing, and in his despair exclaiming, *Thou* hast conquered, O Galilean, '*νενίκηκας Γαλιλαῖε*'! This phrase, though false as history, has a truth in it. It contains a prophecy, — to us a consoling prophecy, — and it is this: Every Julian — *i. e.*, every great and powerful man — who would attempt to resuscitate a state of society which has died, will infallibly be vanquished by the Galilean, — for the Galilean is nothing less than the genius of the future!"

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, Friday, July, 1848.

Father's tongue has just given utterance to a thought which has been very visibly radiating from

his eager eyes for some minutes, — " I thought you were going on with the book." I can only bless you for those two notes, which have emanated from you like so much ambrosial scent from roses and lavender. Not less am I grateful for the Carlyle eulogium.[1] I have shed some quite delicious tears over it. This is a world worth abiding in while one man can thus venerate and love another. More anon, — this from my doleful prison of stupidity and barrenness, with a yawning trap-door ready to let me down into utter fatuity. But I can even yet feel the omnipotence of a glorious chord. Poor pebble as I am, left entangled among slimy weeds, I can yet hear from afar the rushing of the blessed torrent, and rejoice that it is there to bathe and brighten other pebbles less unworthy of the polishing.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, Dec. 1848.

Thank you for a sight of our blessed St. Francis's[2] letter. There is no imaginable moment in which the thought of such a being could be an intrusion. His soul is a blessed *yea*. There is a sort of blasphemy in that proverbial phrase, " Too good to be true." The highest inspiration of the purest, noblest human soul is the nearest expression of the truth. Those extinct volcanoes of one's spiritual life — those eruptions of the intellect and the passions which have scattered the lava of doubt and negation over our early faith — are only a glorious Himalayan chain, beneath which new valleys of undreamed richness and beauty will spread themselves. Shall we poor earthworms have sublimer thoughts than the universe, of which we are poor

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, end of 1848.

[1] On Emerson.
[2] Francis Newman.

chips, — mere effluvia of mind, — shall we have sublimer thoughts than that universe can furnish out into reality? I am living unspeakable moments, and can write no more.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, Jan. 1849.

I think of you perpetually, but my thoughts are all aqueous; they will not crystallise, — they are as fleeting as ripples on the sea. I am suffering perhaps as acutely as ever I did in my life. Breathe a wish that I may gather strength, — the fragrance of your wish will reach me somehow.

*The next letter is to Mrs. Houghton, who, it will be remembered, was the only daughter by Mr. Evans's first marriage. Miss Evans had more intellectual sympathy with this half-sister Fanny than with any of the other members of her family, and it is a pity that more of the letters to her have not been preserved.*

Letter to Mrs. Houghton, Sunday evening, 1849.

I have been holding a court of conscience, and I cannot enjoy my Sunday's music without restoring harmony, without entering a protest against that superficial soul of mine which is perpetually contradicting and belying the true inner soul. I am in that mood which, in another age of the world, would have led me to put on sackcloth and pour ashes on my head, when I call to mind the sins of my tongue, — my animadversions on the faults of others, as if I thought myself to be something when I am nothing. When shall I attain to the true spirit of love which Paul has taught for all the ages? I want no one to excuse me, dear Fanny, — I only want to remove the shadow of my miserable words and deeds from before the divine image of truth and goodness, which I would have all beings worship. I need the Jesuits' discipline of silence, and

though my "evil speaking" issues from the intellectual point of view rather than the moral, — though there may be gall in the thought while there is honey in the feeling, yet the evil speaking is wrong. We may satirise character and qualities in the abstract without injury to our moral nature, but persons hardly ever. Poor hints and sketches of souls as we are, — with some slight transient vision of the perfect and the true, — we had need help each other to gaze at the blessed heavens instead of peering into each other's eyes to find out the motes there.

I have not touched the piano for nearly two months until this morning, when, father being better, I was determined to play a mass before the piano is utterly out of tune again. *Write, asking for nothing again,* like a true disciple of Jesus. I am still feeling rather shattered in brain and limbs, but do not suppose that I lack inward peace and strength. My body is the defaulter, — *consciously* so. I triumph over all things in the spirit, but the flesh is weak, and disgraces itself by headaches and backaches. I am delighted to find that you mention Macaulay, because that is an indication that Mr. Hennell has been reading him. I thought of Mr. H. all through the book, as the only person I could be quite sure would enjoy it as much as I did myself. I did not know if it would interest you: tell me more explicitly that it does. Think of Babylon being unearthed in spite of the prophecies? Truly we are looking before and after, "au jour d'aujourd'hui," as Monsieur Bricolin says. Send me the criticism of Jacques the morn's morning, — only beware there are not too many blasphemies against my divinity.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, Sunday morning, 4th Feb. 1849.

Paint soap-bubbles, — and never fear but I will find *a* meaning, though very likely not your meaning. Paint the crucifixion in a bubble, — after Turner, — and then the resurrection: I see them now.

There has been a vulgar man sitting by while I have been writing, and I have been saying parenthetical bits of civility to him to help out poor father in his conversation, so I have not been quite sure what I have been saying to you. I have woful aches which take up half my nervous strength.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 9th Feb. 1849.

My life is a perpetual nightmare, and always haunted by something to be done, which I have never the time, or rather the energy, to do. Opportunity is kind, but only to the industrious, and I, alas! am not one of them. I have sat down in desperation this evening, though dear father is very uneasy, and his moans distract me, just to tell you that you have full absolution for your criticism, which I do not reckon of the impertinent order. I wish you thoroughly to understand that the writers who have most profoundly influenced me, — who have rolled away the waters from their bed, raised new mountains and spread delicious valleys for me, — are not in the least oracles to me. It is just possible that I may not embrace one of their opinions, — that I may wish my life to be shaped quite differently from theirs. For instance, it would signify nothing to me if a very wise person were to stun me with proofs that Rousseau's views of life, religion, and government are miserably erroneous, — that he was guilty of some of the worst *bassesses* that have degraded civilised man. I might admit all this: and it would be not the less true that Rousseau's genius has sent that electric thrill through my intellectual and moral frame

which has awakened me to new perceptions, — which has made man and nature a fresh world of thought and feeling to me; and this not by teaching me any new belief. It is simply that the rushing mighty wind of his inspiration has so quickened my faculties that I have been able to shape more definitely for myself ideas which had previously dwelt as dim *Ahnungen* in my soul; the fire of his genius has so fused together old thoughts and prejudices, that I have been ready to make new combinations.

It is thus with George Sand. I should never dream of going to her writings as a moral code or text-book. I don't care whether I agree with her about marriage or not, — whether I think the design of her plot correct, or that she had no precise design at all, but began to write as the spirit moved her, and trusted to Providence for the catastrophe, which I think the more probable case. It is sufficient for me, as a reason for bowing before her in eternal gratitude to that "great power of God manifested in her," that I cannot read six pages of hers without feeling that it is given to her to delineate human passion and its results and (I must say, in spite of your judgment) some of the moral instincts and their tendencies, with such truthfulness, such nicety of discrimination, such tragic power, and withal, such loving, gentle humour, that one might live a century with nothing but one's own dull faculties, and not know so much as those six pages will suggest. The psychological anatomy of Jacques and Fernande in the early days of their marriage seems quite preternaturally true, — I mean that her power of describing it is preternatural. Fernande and Jacques are merely the feminine and the masculine nature, and their early married life an every-day tragedy;

but I will not dilate on the book or on your criticism, for I am so sleepy that I should write nothing but *bêtises.* I have at last the most delightful "De Imitatione Christi," with quaint woodcuts. One breathes a cool air as of cloisters in the book, — it makes one long to be a saint for a few months. Verily its piety has its foundations in the depth of the divine-human soul.

*In March Miss Evans wrote a short notice of the "Nemesis of Faith" for the "Coventry Herald," in which she says: —*

"We are sure that its author is a bright particular star, though he sometimes leaves us in doubt whether he be not a fallen 'son of the morning.'"

*The paper was sent to Mr. Froude, and on 23d March Mrs. Bray writes to Miss Hennell: "Last night at dusk M. A. came running in in high glee with a most charming note from Froude, naïvely and prettily requesting her to reveal herself. He says he recognised her hand in the review in the 'Coventry Herald,' and if she thinks him a fallen star she might help him to rise, but he 'believes he has only been dipped in the Styx, and is not much the worse for the bath.' Poor girl, I am so pleased she should have this little episode in her dull life."*

*The next letter again refers to Mr. Froude's books.*

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, Wednesday, April, 1849.

Tell me not that I am a mere prater, — that feeling never talks. I will talk, and caress, and look lovingly, until death makes me as stony as the Gorgon-like heads of all the judicious people I know. What is anything worth until it is uttered? Is not the universe one great utterance? Utterance there must be in word or deed to make life of any worth. Every true pentecost is a gift of utterance. Life is too short and opportunities too meagre for many deeds;

besides, the best friendships are precisely those where there is no possibility of material helpfulness, — and I would take no deeds as an adequate compensation for the frigid glassy eye and hard indifferent tones of one's very solid and sensible and conscientious friend. You will wonder of what this is *apropos*, — only of a little bitterness in my own soul just at this moment, and not of anything between you and me. I have nothing to tell you, for all the "haps" of my life are so indifferent. I spin my existence so entirely out of myself that there is a sad want of proper names in my conversation, and I am becoming a greater bore than ever. It is a consciousness of this that has kept me from writing to you. My letters would be a sort of hermit's diary. I have so liked the thought of your enjoying the "Nemesis of Faith." I quote Keats's sonnet *apropos* of that book. It has made me feel —

> "Like some watcher of the skies
> When a new planet swims into his ken;
> Or like stout Cortez — when with eagle eyes
> He stared at the Pacific, and all his men
> Look'd at each other with a wild surmise, —
> Silent, upon a peak in Darien."

You must read "The Shadows of the Clouds." It produces a sort of palpitation that one hardly knows whether to call wretched or delightful. I cannot take up the book again, though wanting very much to read it more closely. Poor and shallow as one's own soul is, it is blessed to think that a sort of transubstantiation is possible by which the greater ones can live in us. Egotism apart, another's greatness, beauty, or bliss is one's own. And let us sing a *Magnificat* when we are conscious that this power of expansion and sympathy is growing, just in proportion as the individual sat-

isfactions are lessening. Miserable dust of the earth we are, but it is worth while to be so, for the sake of the living soul, — the breath of God within us. You see I can do nothing but scribble my own prosy stuff, — such chopped straw as my soul is foddered on. I am translating the "Tractatus Theologico-Politicus" of Spinoza, and seem to want the only friend that knows how to praise or blame. How exquisite is the satisfaction of feeling that another mind than your own sees precisely where and what is the difficulty, — and can exactly appreciate the success with which it is overcome. One knows — *sed longo intervallo* — the full meaning of the "fit audience though few." How an artist must hate the noodles that stare at his picture, with a vague notion that it *is* a clever thing to be able to paint!

Letter to Mrs. Pears, 10th May, 1849.

I know it will gladden your heart to hear that father spoke of you the other day with affection and gratitude. He remembers you as one who helped to strengthen that beautiful spirit of resignation which has never left him through his long trial. His mind is as clear and rational as ever, notwithstanding his feebleness, and he gives me a thousand little proofs that he understands my affection and responds to it. These are very precious moments to me; my chair by father's bedside is a very blessed seat to me. My delight in the idea that you are being benefited after all, prevents me from regretting you, though you are just the friend that would complete my comfort. Every addition to your power of enjoying life is an expansion of mine. I partake of your ebb and flow. I am going to my post now. I have just snatched an interval to let you know that though you have taken away a part of

ROBERT EVANS

*Reproduced from a miniature. By kind permission of Messrs. Harper & Brothers*

yourself from me, neither you nor any one else can take the whole.

*It will have been seen from these late letters, that the last few months of her father's illness had been a terrible strain on his daughter's health and spirits. She did all the nursing herself, and Mrs. Congreve (who was then Miss Bury, daughter of the doctor who was attending Mr. Evans, — and who, it will be seen, subsequently became perhaps the most intimate and the closest of George Eliot's friends) tells me that her father told her at the time, that he never saw a patient more admirably and thoroughly cared for. The translating was a great relief when she could get to it. Under date of 19th April, 1849, Mrs. Bray writes to Miss Hennell: "M. A. is happy now with this Spinoza to do: she says it is such a rest for her mind.*

*The next letter to Rosehill pathetically describes how the end came at last to Mr. Evans's sufferings: —*

Letter to the Brays, half-past nine, Wednesday morning, 31st May, 1849.

Dear friends, Mr. Bury told us last night that he thought father would not last till morning. I sat by him with my hand in his till four o'clock, and he then became quieter and has had some comfortable sleep. He is obviously weaker this morning, and has been for the last two or three days so painfully reduced that I dread to think what his dear frame may become before life gives way. My brother slept here last night, and will be here again to-night. What shall I be without my father? It will seem as if a part of my moral nature were gone. I write when I can, but I do not know whether my letter will do to send this evening.

*P. S.* — Father is very, very much weaker this evening.

*Mr. Evans died during that night, 31st May, 1849.*

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER III

### MAY, 1846, TO MAY, 1849

Visit to Mrs. Hennell at Hackney — Letters to Mrs. Bray — Strauss Translation published — Visit to Dover with father — Classical books wanted — Pleasure in Strauss's letter — Brays suspect novel-writing — Letters to Miss Sara Hennell — Good spirits — Wicksteed's review of the Strauss Translation — Reading Foster's life — Visit to Griff — Child's view of God (*apropos* of Miss Hennell's "Heliados") — Visit to London — "Elijah" — Likes London less — The Sibree family and Mrs. John Cash's reminiscences — Letter to Miss Mary Sibree — Letters to Miss Sara Hennell — Mental depression — Opinion of Charles Hennell's "Inquiry" — Visit to the Isle of Wight with father — Admiration of Richardson — Blanco White — Delight in George Sand's "Lettres d'un Voyageur" — Letters to Mr. John Sibree — Opinion of Mrs. Hannah More's letters — "Tancred," "Coningsby," and "Sybil" — D'Israeli's theory of races — Gentile nature kicks against superiority of Jews — Bows only to the supremacy of Hebrew poetry — Superiority of music among the arts — Relation of religion to art — Thorwaldsen's Christ — Admiration of Roberts and Creswick — The intellect and moral nature restrain the passions and senses — Mr. Dawson the Lecturer — Satisfaction in French Revolution of '48 — The men of the barricade bowing to the image of Christ — Difference between French and English working-classes — The need of utterance — Sympathy with Mr. Sibree in religious difficulties — Longing for a high attic in Geneva — Letters to Miss Sara Hennell — Views on correspondence — Mental depression — Father's illness — Father better — Goes with him to St. Leonards — Letter to Charles Bray — Depression to be overcome by thought and love — Admiration of Louis Blanc — Recovery from depression — "Jane Eyre" — Return to Coventry — Meets Emerson — Strauss's pamphlet on Julian the Apostate — Carlyle's eulogium on Emerson — Francis Newman — Suffering from depression — Letter to Mrs. Houghton — Self-condemnation for evil speaking — Letters to Miss Hennell — Macaulay's History — On the influence of George Sand's and Rousseau's writing — Writes review of the "Nemesis of Faith" for the "Coventry Herald" — Opinion of the "Nemesis" and the "Shadows of the Clouds" — Translating Spinoza's "Tractatus Theologico-Politicus" — Letter to Mrs. Pears — The consolations of nursing — Strain of father's illness — Father's death.

## CHAPTER IV

*IT fortunately happened that the Brays had planned a trip to the Continent for this month of June, 1849, and Miss Evans, being left desolate by the death of her father, accepted their invitation to join them. On the 11th June they started, going by way of Paris, Lyons, Avignon, Marseilles, Nice, Genoa, Milan, Como, Lago Maggiore, Martigny, and Chamounix, arriving at Geneva in the third week of July. Here Miss Evans determined to remain for some months, the Brays returning home. Before they went, however, they helped her to settle herself comfortably* en pension, *and, as will be seen from the following letters, the next eight months were quietly and peacefully happy. The* pension *selected in the first instance was the Campagne Plongeon, which stands on a slight eminence a few hundred yards back from the road on the route d'Hermance, some ten minutes' walk from the Hotel Métropole. From the Hotel National on the Quai de Mont Blanc one catches a pleasant glimpse of it nestling among its trees. A good-sized gleaming white house, with a centre and gables at each side, — a flight of steps leading from the middle window to the ground. A meadow in front, nicely planted, slopes charmingly down to the blue lake; and behind the house, on the left-hand side, there is an avenue of remarkably fine chestnut-trees, whence there is a magnificent view of the Jura mountains on the opposite side of the lake. The road to Geneva is very beautiful by the lake-side, bordered with plane-trees. It was a delightful, soothing change after the long illness and the painful death of her father, — after the monotonous dulness, too, of an English provincial town like Coventry, where there is little beauty of any sort to gladden the soul. In the first months following a great loss it is good to be alone for a time, — alone*

*especially amidst beautiful scenes, — and alone in the sense of being removed from habitual associations, but yet constantly in the society of new acquaintances, who are sufficiently interesting, but not too intimate. The Swiss correspondence which follows is chiefly addressed to the Brays collectively, and describes the life minutely.*

About my comfort here, I find no disagreeables, and have every physical comfort that I care about.

Letter to the Brays, 27th July, 1849.

The family seems well-ordered and happy. I have made another friend too, — an elderly English lady, a Mrs. Locke, who used to live at Ryde, — a pretty old lady, with plenty of shrewdness and knowledge of the world. She began to say very kind things to me in rather a waspish tone yesterday morning at breakfast. I liked her better at dinner and tea, and to-day we are quite confidential. I only hope she will stay, — she is just the sort of person I shall like to have to speak to, — not at all "congenial," but with a character of her own. The going down to tea bores me, and I shall get out of it as soon as I can, unless I can manage to have the newspapers to read. The American lady embroiders slippers, — the mamma looks on and does nothing. The Marquis and his friends play at whist; the old ladies sew; and Madame says things so true that they are insufferable. She is obliged to talk to all, and cap their *niaiseries* with some suitable observation. She has been very kind and motherly to me. I like her better every time I see her. I have quiet and comfort, — what more can I want to make me a healthy reasonable being once more? I will never go near a friend again until I can bring joy and peace in my heart and in my face, — but remember that friendship will be easy then.

I hope my imagination paints truly when it

shows me all of you seated with beaming faces round the tea-table at Rosehill. I shall be yearning to know that things as well as people are smiling on you; but I am sure you will not let me wait for news of you longer than is necessary. My life here would be delightful if we could always keep the same set of people; but alas! I fear one generation will go and another come so fast that I shall not care to become acquainted with any of them. My good Mrs. Locke is not going, that is one comfort. She is quite a mother to me, — helps me to buy my candles and do all my shopping, — takes care of me at dinner, and quite rejoices when she sees me enjoy conversation or anything else. The St. Germains are delightful people, — the Marquise really seems to me the most charming person I ever saw, with kindness enough to make the ultra-politeness of her manners quite genuine. She is very good to me, and says of me, "Je m'interesse vivement à Mademoiselle." The Marquis is the most well-bred, harmless of men. He talks very little, — every sentence seems a terrible gestation, and comes forth *fortissimo;* but he generally bestows one on me, and seems especially to enjoy my poor tunes (mind you, all these trivialities are to satisfy your vanity, not mine, — because you are beginning to be ashamed of having loved me). The grey-headed gentleman got quite fond of talking philosophy with me before he went; but alas! he and a very agreeable young man who was with him are gone to Aix les Bains. The young German is the Baron de H. I should think he is not more than two or three and twenty, very good-natured, but a most determined enemy to all gallantry. I fancy he is a Communist; but he seems

Letter to the Brays, 5th Aug. 1849.

to have been joked about his opinions by Madame and the rest, until he has determined to keep a proud silence on such matters. He has begun to talk to me, and I think we should become good friends; but he, too, is gone on an expedition to Monte Rosa. He is expecting his brother to join him here on his return, but I fear they will not stay long. The *gouvernante* is a German, with a moral region that would rejoice Mr. Bray's eyes. Poor soul, she is in a land of strangers, and often seems to feel her loneliness. Her situation is a very difficult one; and "*die Angst*," she says, often brings on a pain at her heart. Madame is a woman of some reading and considerable talent, — very fond of politics, a devourer of the journals, with an opinion ready for you on any subject whatever. It will be a serious loss to her to part with the St. Germain family. I fear that they will not stay longer than this month. I should be quite indifferent to the world that comes or goes if once I had my boxes with all my books. Last Sunday I went with Madame to a small church near Plongeon, and I could easily have fancied myself in an Independent chapel at home. The spirit of the sermon was not a whit more elevated than that of our friend Dr. Harris, — the text, "What shall I do to be saved?" — the answer of Jesus being blinked as usual.

To-day I have been to hear one of the most celebrated preachers, M. Meunier. His sermon was really eloquent, — all written down, but delivered with so much energy and feeling that you never thought of the book. It is curious to notice how patriotism — *dévouement à la patrie* — is put in the sermons as the first of virtues, even before devotion to the Church. We never hear of it in England after we leave school. The good Mar-

quis goes with his family and servants, all nicely drest, to the Catholic Church. They are a most orderly set of people: there is nothing but their language and their geniality and politeness to distinguish them from one of the best of our English aristocratic families. I am perfectly comfortable: every one is kind to me and seems to like me. Your kind hearts will rejoice at this, I know. Only remember that I am just as much interested in all that happens to you at Rosehill as you are in what happens to me at Plongeon. Pray that the motto of Geneva may become mine, — "*Post tenebras lux.*"

Letter to the Brays, 20th Aug. 1849.

I have no head for writing to-day, for I have been keeping my bed for the last three days; but I must remember that writing to you is like ringing a bell hung in the planet Jupiter, — it is so weary a while before one's letters reach. I have been positively sickening for want of my boxes, and anxiety to hear of my relations. Your kind letter of this morning has quieted the latter a little; but my boxes, alas! have not appeared. Do not be alarmed about my health. I have only had a terrible headache, — prolonged, in fact, by the assiduities of the good people here; for the first day I lay in bed I had the whole female world of Plongeon in my bedroom, and talked so incessantly that I was unable to sleep after it: the consequence, as you may imagine, was that the next day I was very much worse; but I am getting better, and indeed it was worth while to be ill to have so many kind attentions. There is a fresh German family from Frankfurt here just now, — Madame Cornelius and her children. She is the daughter of the richest banker in Frankfurt, and, what is better, full of heart and mind, with a face

that tells you so before she opens her lips. She has more reading than the Marquise, being German and Protestant; and it is a real refreshment to talk with her for half an hour. The dear Marquise is a truly devout Catholic. It is beautiful to hear her speak of the comfort she has in the confessional, — for our *têtes-à-tête* have lately turned on religious matters. She says I am in a " mauvaise voie sous le rapport de la religion. Peut-être vous vous marierez, et le mariage, chère amie, sans la foi religieuse! . . . " She says I have isolated myself by my studies, — that I am too cold and have too little confidence in the feelings of others towards me, — that I do not believe how deep an interest she has conceived in my lot. She says Signor Goldrini (the young Italian who was here for a week) told her, when he had been talking to me one evening, " Vous aimerez cette demoiselle, j'en suis sûr " — and she has found his prediction true. They are leaving for their own country on Wednesday. She hopes I shall go to Italy and see her; and when I tell her that I have no faith that she will remember me long enough for me to venture on paying her a visit if ever I should go to Italy again, she shakes her head at my incredulity. She was born at Genoa. Her father was three years Sardinian Minister at Constantinople before she was married, and she speaks with enthusiasm of her life there, — " C'est là le pays de la vraie poésie oú l'on sent ce que c'est que de vivre par le cœur." M. de H. is returned from Monte Rosa. He would be a nice person if he had another soul added to the one he has by nature, — the soul that comes by sorrow and love. I stole his book while he was gone, — the first volume of Louis Blanc's " History of Ten Years." It contains a very inter-

esting account of the three days of July, 1830. His brother is coming to join him, so I hope he will not go at present. Tell Miss Sibree my address, and beg her to write to me all about herself, and to write on thin paper. I hardly know yet whether I shall like this place well enough to stay here through the winter. I have been under the disadvantage of wanting all on which I chiefly depend, — my books, &c. When I have been here another month, I shall be better able to judge. I hope you managed to get in the black velvet dress. The people dress, and think about dressing, here more even than in England. You would not know me if you saw me. The Marquise took on her the office of *femme de chambre* and drest my hair one day. She has abolished all my curls, and made two things stick out on each side of my head like those on the head of the Sphinx. All the world says I look infinitely better; so I comply, though to myself I seem uglier than ever, — if possible. I am fidgeted to death about my boxes, and that tiresome man not to acknowledge the receipt of them. I make no apology for writing all my peevishness and follies, because I want you to do the same, — to let me know everything about you, to the aching of your fingers, — and you tell me very little. My boxes, my boxes! I dream of them night and day. Dear Mr. Hennell! Give him my heartiest affectionate remembrances. Tell him I find no one here so spirited as he: there are no better jokes going than I can make myself. Mrs. Hennell and Mrs. C. Hennell too, all are remembered, — if even I have only seen them in England.

Mme. de Ludwigsdorff, the wife of an Austrian baron, has been here for two days, and is coming again. She is handsome, spirited, and clever, —

pure English by birth, but quite foreign in manners and appearance. She, and all the world besides, are going to winter in Italy. Nothing annoys me now, — I feel perfectly at home, and shall really be comfortable when I have all my little matters about me. This place looks more lovely to me every day, — the lake, the town, the *campagnes* with their stately trees and pretty houses, the glorious mountains in the distance; one can hardly believe one's self on earth: one might live here and forget that there is such a thing as want or labour or sorrow. The perpetual presence of all this beauty has somewhat the effect of mesmerism or chloroform. I feel sometimes as if I were sinking into an agreeable state of numbness on the verge of unconsciousness, and seem to want well pinching to rouse me. The other day (Sunday) there was a *fête* held on the lake, — the *fête* of Navigation. I went out with some other ladies in M. de H.'s boat at sunset, and had the richest draught of beauty. All the boats of Geneva turned out in their best attire. When the moon and stars came out, there were beautiful fireworks sent up from the boats. The mingling of the silver and the golden rays on the rippled lake, the bright colours of the boats, the music, the splendid fireworks, and the pale moon looking at it all with a sort of grave surprise, made up a scene of perfect enchantment, — and our dear old Mont Blanc was there in his white ermine robe. I rowed all the time, and hence comes my palsy. I can perfectly fancy dear Mrs. Pears in her Leamington house. How beautiful all that Foleshill life looks now, like the distant Jura in the morning! She was such a sweet, dear, good friend to me. My walks with her, my little

Letter to the Brays, 28th Aug. 1849.

visits to them in the evening, — all is remembered. I am glad you have seen Fanny again; any attention you show her is a real kindness to me, and I assure you she is worth it. You know, or you do not know, that my nature is so chameleon-like, I shall lose all my identity unless you keep nourishing the old self with letters, — so, pray, write as much and as often as you can. It jumps admirably with my humour to live in two worlds at once in this way. I possess my dearest friends and my old environment in my thoughts, — and another world of novelty and beauty in which I am actually moving, — and my contrariety of disposition always makes the world that lives in my thoughts the dearer of the two, — the one in which I more truly dwell. So, after all, I enjoy my friends most when I am away from them. I shall not say so, though, if I should live to rejoin you six or seven months hence. Keep me for seven [1] years longer and you will find out the use of me, like all other pieces of trumpery.

Have I confided too much in your generosity in supposing that you would write to me first? or is there some other reason for your silence? I suffer greatly from it, — not entirely from selfish reasons, but in great part because I am really anxious to know all about you, your state of health and spirits — the aspect of things within and without you. Did Mr. Bray convey to you my earnest request that you would write to me? You know of my whereabouts and circumstances from my good friends at Rosehill, so that I have little to tell you, — at least I have not spirit to write of myself until I have heard

Letter to Mrs. Houghton, 6th Sept. 1849.

[1] It may be noted as a curious verification of this presentiment that "Scenes of Clerical Life" were published in 1856, — just seven years later.

from you, and have an assurance from yourself that you yet care about me. Sara (Mrs. Isaac Evans) has sent me word of the sad, sad loss that has befallen poor Chrissey and Edward, — a loss in which I feel that I have a share; for that angelic little being had great interest for me, — she promised to pay so well for any care spent on her. I can imagine poor Edward's almost frantic grief, and I dread the effect on Chrissey's weak frame of her more silent suffering. Anything you can tell me about them will be read very eagerly. I begin to feel the full value of a letter, — so much so, that if ever I am convinced that any one has the least anxiety to hear from me, I shall always reckon it amongst the first duties to sit down without delay, giving no ear to the suggestions of my idleness and aversion to letter-writing. Indeed I am beginning to find it really pleasant to write to my friends, now that I am so far away from them; and I could soon fill a sheet to you if your silence did not weigh too heavily on my heart. My health is by no means good yet, — seldom good enough not to be a sort of drag on my mind; so you must make full allowance for too much egotism and susceptibility in me. It seems to be three years instead of three months since I was in England and amongst you, and I imagine that all sorts of revolutions must have taken place in the interim; whereas to you, I daresay, remaining in your old home and among your everyday duties, the time has slipped away so rapidly that you are unable to understand my anxiety to hear from you. I think the climate here is not particularly healthy, — I suppose from the vicinity of the lake, which, however, becomes so dear to me that one cannot bear to hear it accused. Good-bye, dear Fanny; a thousand blessings to

you whether you write to me or not, and much gratitude if you do.

My boxes arrived last Friday. The expense was fr. 150, — perfectly horrible! Clearly I must give myself for food to the fowls of the air or the fishes of the lake. It is a consolation to a mind imbued with a lofty philosophy, that when one can get nothing to eat, one can still be eaten, — the evil is only apparent. It is quite settled that I cannot stay at Plongeon; I must move into town. But, alas! I must pay fr. 200 per month. If I were there, I should see more conversable people than here. Do you think any one would buy my "Encyclopædia Britannica" at half-price, and my globes? If so, I should not be afraid of exceeding my means, and I should have a little money to pay for my piano, and for some lessons of different kinds that I want to take. The Encyclopædia is the last edition, and cost £42, and the globes £8 10*s*. I shall never have anywhere to put them, so it is folly to keep them if any one will buy them. No one else has written to me, though I have written to almost all. I would rather have it so than feel that the debt was on my side. When will you come to me for help, that I may be able to hate you a little less? I shall leave here as soon as I am able to come to a decision, as I am anxious to feel settled, and the weather is becoming cold. This house is like a bird-cage set down in a garden. Do not count this among my letters. I am good for nothing to-day, and can write nothing well but bitterness, so that I will not trust myself to say another word. The Baronne de Ludwigsdorff seems to have begun to like me very much, and is really kind; so you see heaven sends kind souls, though they are by no means

Letter to the Brays, 13th Sept. 1849.

kindred ones. Poor Mrs. Locke is to write to me, — has given me a little ring, — says, " Take care of yourself, my child, — have some tea of your own, — you 'll be quite another person if you get some introductions to clever people, — you 'll get on well among a certain set, — that 's true; " it is her way to say " that 's true," after all her affirmations. She says, " You won't find any kindred spirits at Plongeon, my dear."

I am feeling particularly happy because I have had very kind letters from my brother and sisters.

Letter to the Brays, 20th Sept. 1849.

I am ashamed to fill sheets about myself, but I imagined that this was precisely what you wished. Pray correct my mistake, if it be one, and then I will look over the Calvin MSS. and give you some information of really general interest, suited to our mutual capacities. Mme. Ludwigsdorff is so good to me, — a charming creature, — so anxious to see me comfortably settled, — petting me in all sorts of ways. She sends me tea when I wake in the morning, orange-flower water when I go to bed, — grapes, — and her maid to wait on me. She says if I like she will spend the winter after this at Paris with me, and introduce me to her friends there; but she does not mean to attach herself to me, because I shall never like her long. I shall be tired of her when I have sifted her, &c. She says I have more intellect than *morale*, and other things more true than agreeable; however, she is " greatly interested " in me, — has told me her troubles and her feelings, she says, in spite of herself; for she has never been able before in her life to say so much even to her old friends. It is a mystery she cannot unravel. She is a person of high culture, according to the ordinary notions of

what feminine culture should be. She speaks French and German perfectly, plays well, and has the most perfect polish of manner, — the most thorough refinement both socially and morally. She is tall and handsome, — a striking-looking person, but with a sweet feminine expression when she is with those she likes, — dresses exquisitely, — in fine, is all that I am not. I shall tire you with all this, but I want you to know what good creatures there are here as elsewhere. Miss F. tells me that the first day she sat by my side at dinner, she looked at me, and thought to herself, "That is a grave lady; I do not think I shall like her much;" but as soon as I spoke to her, and she looked into my eyes, she felt she could love me. Then she lent me a book written by her cousin — a religious novel — in which there is a fearful infidel who will not believe, and hates all who do, &c., &c. Then she invited me to walk with her, and came to talk in my room; then invited me to go to the Oratoire with them, till I began to be uncomfortable under the idea that they fancied I was evangelical, and that I was gaining their affection under false pretences; so I told Miss F. that I was going to sacrifice her good opinion, and confess my heresies. I quite expected from their manner and character that they would forsake me in horror, — but they are as kind as ever. They never go into the *salon* in the evening, and I have almost forsaken it, spending the evening frequently in Mme. de Ludwigsdorff's room, where we have some delightful tea. The tea of the house here is execrable; or rather, as Mrs. A. says, "How glad we ought to be that it has no taste at all, — it might have a very bad one!" I like the A's.; they are very good-

natured. Mrs. A., a very ugly but ladylike little woman, who is under an infatuation "as it regards" her caps, — always wearing the brightest rose-colour or intensest blue, — with a complexion not unlike a dirty primrose glove. The rest of the people are nothing to me, except, indeed, dear old Mlle. Faizan, who comes into my room when I am ill with "Qu'est ce que vous avez, ma bonne?" in the tone of the kindest old aunt, and thinks that I am the most amiable douce creature, which will give you a better opinion of her charity than her penetration.

Dear creatures! no one is so good as you yet. I have not yet found any one who can bear comparison with you; not in kindness to me, — *ça va sans dire*, — but in solidity of mind and in expansion of feeling. This is a very coarse thing to say, but it came to the end of my pen, and *litera scripta manet*, — at least when it comes at the end of the second page. I shall certainly stay at Geneva this winter, and shall return to England as early as the spring weather will permit, always supposing that nothing occurs to alter my plans. I am still thin; so how much will be left of me next April I am afraid to imagine. I shall be length without breadth. Cara's assurance that you are well and comfortable is worth a luncheon to me, which is just the thing I am generally most in want of, for we dine at six now. I love to imagine you in your home; and everything seems easy to me when I am not disturbed about the health or well-being of my loved ones. It is really so; I do not say it out of any sort of affectation, benevolent or otherwise. I am without carefulness, alas! in more senses than one. Thank Sara very heartily for her letter. I do not write a

special sheet for her to-day, because I have to write to two or three other people, but she must not the less believe how I valued a little private morsel from her; and also that I would always rather she wrote "from herself" than "to me," — that is my theory of letter-writing. Your letters are as welcome as Elijah's ravens, — I thought of saying the dinner-bell, only that would be too gross! I get impatient at the end of the ten days which it takes for our letters to go to and fro; and I have not the least faith in the necessity for keeping the sheet three or four days before Mr. Bray can find time to write his meagre bit. If you see the Miss Franklins, give my love to them; my remembrances to Mr. and Mrs. Whittem; love to Miss Sibree always. Hearty love to Clapton [1] and Woodford; [2] and a very diffusive benevolence to the world in general, without any particular attachment to A. or B. I am trying to please Mr. Bray. Good-bye, dear souls. *Dominus vobiscum.*

Letter to the Brays, Thursday, 4th Oct. 1849.

I am anxious for you to know my new address, as I shall leave here on Tuesday. I think I have at last found the very thing. I shall be the only lodger. The *appartement* is *assez joli*, with an alcove, so that it looks like a sitting-room in the daytime, — the people, an artist of great respectability, and his wife, a most kind-looking ladylike person, with two boys, who have the air of being well educated. They seem very anxious to have me, and are ready to do anything to accommodate me. I shall live with them, — that is, dine with them; breakfast in my own room. The terms are fr. 150 per month, light included. M. and Mme. D'Albert

[1] Mrs. Hennell. [2] Mr. and Mrs. Charles Hennell.

are middle-aged, — musical, and, I am told, have *beaucoup d'esprit*. I hope this will not exceed my means for four or five months. There is a nice large *salon* and a good *salle à manger*. I am told that their society is very good. Mme. de Ludwigsdorff was about going there a year ago, and it was she who recommended it to me.

I hope Sara's fears are supererogatory, — a proof of a too nervous solicitude about me, for which I am grateful, though it does me no good to hear of it. I want encouraging rather than warning and checking. I believe I am so constituted that I shall never be cured of my faults except by God's discipline. If human beings would but believe it, they do me most good by saying to me the kindest things truth will permit; and really I cannot hope those will be superlatively kind. The reason I wished to raise a little extra money is that I wanted to have some lessons and other means of culture, — not for my daily bread, for which I hope I shall have enough; but since you think my scheme impracticable, we will dismiss it. *Au reste*, be in no anxiety about me. Nothing is going wrong that I know of. I am not an absolute fool and weakling. When I am fairly settled in my new home, I will write again. My address will be — M. D'Albert, Rue des Chanoines, No. 107.

Letter to Mrs. Houghton, 4th Oct. 1849.

The blessed compensation there is in all things made your letter doubly precious for having been waited for, and it would have inspired me to write to you again much sooner, but that I have been in uncertainty about settling myself for the winter, and I wished to send you my future address. I am to move to my new home on Tuesday the 9th. I shall not

at all regret leaving here; the season is beginning to be rather sombre, though the glorious chestnuts here are still worth looking at half the day. You have heard of some of the people whom I have described in my letters to Rosehill. The dear little old maid, Mlle. Faizan, is quite a good friend to me, — extremely prosy, and full of tiny details; but really people of that calibre are a comfort to one occasionally, when one has not strength enough for more stimulating things. She is a sample of those happy souls who ask for nothing but the work of the hour, however trivial, — who are contented to live without knowing whether they effect anything, but who do really effect much good, simply by their calm and even *maintien*. I laugh to hear her say in a tone of remonstrance, — "Mme. de Ludwigsdorff dit qu'elle s'ennuie quand les soirées sont longues: moi, je ne conçois pas comment on peut s'ennuyer quand on a de l'ouvrage ou des jeux ou de la conversation." When people who are dressing elegantly and driving about to make calls every day of their life have been telling me of their troubles, — their utter hopelessness of ever finding a vein worth working in their future life, — my thoughts have turned towards many whose sufferings are of a more tangible character, and I have really felt all the old commonplaces about the equality of human destinies, always excepting those spiritual differences which are apart not only from poverty and riches but from individual affections. Dear Chrissey has found time and strength to write to me, and very precious her letter was, though I wept over it. "Deep abiding grief must be mine," she says, and I know well it must be. The mystery of trial! It falls with such ava-

lanche weight on the head of the meek and patient. I wish I could do something of more avail for my friends than love them and long for their happiness.

Letter to the Brays, 11th Oct. 1849.

M. and Mme. D'Albert are really clever people, — people worth sitting up an hour longer to talk to. This does not hinder Madame from being an excellent manager, — dressing scrupulously, and keeping her servants in order. She has hung my room with pictures, one of which is the most beautiful group of flowers conceivable thrown on an open Bible, — painted by herself. I have a piano which I hire. There is also one in the *salon*. M. D'Albert plays and sings, and in the winter he tells me they have parties to sing masses and do other delightful things. In fact, I think I am just in the right place. I breakfast in my own room at half-past eight, lunch at half-past twelve, and dine at four or a little after, and take tea at eight. From the tea-table I have gone into the *salon* and chatted until bedtime. It would really have been a pity to have stayed at Plongeon, out of reach of everything, and with people so little worth talking to. I have not found out the *désagrémens* here yet. It is raining horribly, but this just saves me from the regret I should have felt at having quitted the chestnuts of Plongeon. That *campagne* looked splendid in its autumn dress.

*George Eliot retained so warm an admiration and love for M. D'Albert to the end of her life, that it seems fitting here to mention that he still lives, carrying well the weight of eighty winters. He is* conservateur *of the Athénée, — a permanent exhibition of works of art in Geneva; and he published only last year (1883) a French translation of the "Scenes of Clerical Life," having already previ-*

*ously published translations of "Adam Bede," "The Mill on the Floss," "Silas Marner," and "Romola." The description of his personal appearance, in the following letter, still holds good, save that the grey hair has become quite white. He lost his wife in 1880; and it will be seen from subsequent letters that George Eliot kept up a faithful attachment to her to the end. They were both friends after her own heart. The old apartment is now No. 18 instead of No. 107 Rue des Chanoines, and is occupied as the printing-office of the "Journal de Genève." But half of the rooms remain just as they were five-and-thirty years ago: the* salon, *wainscoted in imitation light-oak panels, with a white China stove, and her bedroom opening off it, — as she had often described it to me; and M. D'Albert has still in his possession the painting of the bunch of beautiful flowers thrown on an open Bible mentioned in the last letter. He told me that when Miss Evans first came to look at the house, she was so horrified with the forbidding aspect of the stairs, that she declared she would not go up above the first floor; but when she got inside the door she was reconciled to her new quarters. Calvin's house is close to the Rue des Chanoines, and she was much interested in it. It will be seen that she did some work in physics under Professor de la Rive; but she principally rested and enjoyed herself during the stay at Geneva. It was exactly the kind of life she was in need of at the time, and the letters show how much she appreciated it.*

Letter to the Brays, 26th Oct. 1849.

I languished for your letter before it came, and read it three times running, — judge whether I care less for you than of old. It is the best of blessings to know that you are well and cheerful; and when I think of all that might happen in a fortnight to make you otherwise, especially in these days of cholera and crises, I cannot help being anxious until I get a fresh assurance that at least five days ago all was well. Before I say anything about myself, I must

contradict your suspicion that I paint things too agreeably for the sake of giving you pleasure. I assure you my letters are subjectively true, — the falsehood, if there be any, is in my manner of seeing things. But I will give you some *vérités positives*, in which, alas! poor imagination has hitherto been able to do little for the world. Mme. D'Albert anticipates all my wants, and makes a spoiled child of me. I like these dear people better and better, — everything is so in harmony with one's moral feeling, that I really can almost say I never enjoyed a more complete *bien être* in my life than during the last fortnight. For M. D'Albert, I love him already as if he were father and brother both. His face is rather haggard-looking, but all the lines and the wavy grey hair indicate the temperament of the artist. I have not heard a word or seen a gesture of his yet that was not perfectly in harmony with an exquisite moral refinement, — indeed one feels a better person always when he is present. He sings well, and plays on the piano a little. It is delightful to hear him talk of his friends, — he admires them so genuinely, — one sees so clearly that there is no reflex egotism. His conversation is charming. I learn something every dinner-time. Mme. D'Albert has less of genius and more of cleverness, — a really ladylike person, who says everything well. She brings up her children admirably, — two nice intelligent boys,[1] — the youngest particularly has a sort of Lamartine expression, with a fine head. It is so delightful to get among people who exhibit no meannesses, no worldlinesses, that one may

[1] Mr. Charles Lewes tells me that when he went to stay with the D'Alberts at Geneva, many years afterwards, they mentioned how much they had been struck by her extraordinary discernment of the character of these two boys.

well be enthusiastic. To me it is so blessed to find any departure from the rule of giving as little as possible for as much as possible. Their whole behaviour to me is as if I were a guest whom they delighted to honour. Last night we had a little knot of their most intimate musical friends, and M. and Mme. D'Albert introduced me to them as if they wished me to know them, — as if they wished me to like their friends and their friends to like me. The people and the evening would have been just after your own hearts. In fact, I have not the slightest pretext for being discontented, — not the shadow of a discomfort. Even the little housemaid Jeanne is charming, — says to me every morning, in the prettiest voice: "Madame a-t-elle bien dormi cette nuit?" — puts fire in my *chauffe-pied* without being told, — cleans my rooms most conscientiously. There, — I promise to weary you less for the future with my descriptions. I could not resist the temptation to speak gratefully of M. and Mme. D'Albert.

Give my love to Mrs. Pears, — my constant ever fresh remembrance. My love to Miss Rebecca Franklin, — tell her I have only spun my web to Geneva, — it will infallibly carry me back again across the gulf, were it twice as great. If Mr. Froude preached the new word at Manchester, I hope he will preach it so as to do without an after explanation, and not bewilder his hearers in the manner of Mephistopheles when he dons the doctor's gown of Faust. I congratulate you on the new edition,[1] and promise to read it with a disposition to admire when I am at Rosehill once more. I am beginning to lose respect for the petty acumen that sees difficulties. I love the souls

[1] "Philosophy of Necessity," by Charles Bray.

that rush along to their goal with a full stream of sentiment, — that have too much of the positive to be harassed by the perpetual negatives, — which, after all, are but the disease of the soul, to be expelled by fortifying the principle of vitality.

Good-bye, dear loves: sha'n't I kiss you when I am in England again, — in England! I already begin to think of the journey as an impossibility. Geneva is so beautiful now, the trees have their richest colouring. Coventry is a fool to it, — but then you are at Coventry, and you are better than lake, trees, and mountains.

We have had some delicious autumn days here. If the fine weather last, I am going up the Salève on Sunday with M. D'Albert. On one side I shall have a magnificent view of the lake, the town, and the Jura; on the other, the range of Mont Blanc. The walks about Geneva are perfectly enchanting. "Ah!" says poor Mlle. Faizan; "nous avons un beau pays si nous n'avions pas ces Radicaux!" The election of the Conseil d'État is to take place in November, and an *émeute* is expected. The actual Government is Radical, and thoroughly detested by all the "respectable" classes. The Vice-President of the Conseil, and the virtual head of the Government, is an unprincipled clever fellow, horribly in debt himself, and on the way to reduce the Government to the same position.

Letter to the Brays, 28th Oct. 1849.

I like my town life vastly. I shall like it still better in the winter. There is an indescribable charm to me in this form of human nest-making. You enter a by no means attractive-looking house, you climb up two or three flights of cold, dark-looking stone steps, you ring at a very modest door, and you

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 28th Oct. 1849.

enter a set of rooms snug or comfortable or elegant. One is so out of reach of intruders, so undiverted from one's occupations by externals, so free from cold rushing winds through hall doors, — one feels in a downy nest high up in a good old tree. I have always had a hankering after this sort of life, and I find it was a true instinct of what would suit me. Just opposite my windows is the street in which the Sisters of Charity live; and if I look out, I generally see either one of them or a sober-looking ecclesiastic. Then a walk of five minutes takes me out of all streets, within sight of beauties that I am sure you too would love, if you did not share my enthusiasm for the town. I have not another minute, having promised to go out before dinner, — so, dearest, take my letter as a hasty kiss, just to let you know how constantly I love you, — how, the longer I live and the more I have felt, the better I know how to value you.

I write at once to answer your questions about business. Spinoza and I have been divorced for several months. My want of health has obliged me to renounce all application. I take walks, play on the piano, read Voltaire, talk to my friends, and just take a dose of mathematics every day to prevent my brain from becoming quite soft. If you are anxious to publish the translation in question, I could, after a few months, finish the "Tractatus Theologico-Politicus" to keep it company; but I confess to you that I think you would do better to abstain from printing a translation. What is wanted in English is not a translation of Spinoza's works, but a true estimate of his life and system. After one has rendered his Latin faithfully into English, one

Letter to Charles Bray, 4th Dec. 1849.

feels that there is another yet more difficult process of translation for the reader to effect, and that the only mode of making Spinoza accessible to a larger number is to study his books, then shut them, and give an analysis. For those who read the very words Spinoza wrote, there is the same sort of interest in his style as in the conversation of a person of great capacity who has led a solitary life, and who says from his own soul what all the world is saying by rote; but this interest hardly belongs to a translation.

Letter to Mrs. Bray, 4th Dec. 1849.

Your letter is very sweet to me, giving me a picture of your quiet life. How shall I enable you to imagine mine, since you know nothing of the localities? My good friends here only change for the better. Mme. D'Albert is all affection; M. D'Albert all delicacy and intelligence; the friends to whom they have introduced me very kind in their attentions. In fact, I want nothing but a little more money to feel more at ease about my fires, &c. I am in an atmosphere of love and refinement; even the little servant Jeanne seems to love me, and does me good every time she comes into the room. I can say anything to M. and Mme. D'Albert. M. D'A. understands everything, and if Madame does not understand, she believes, — that is, she seems always sure that I mean something edifying. She kisses me like a mother, and I am baby enough to find that a great addition to my happiness. *Au reste*, I am careful for nothing; I am a sort of supernumerary spoon, and there will be no damage to the set if I am lost. My heart ties are not loosened by distance, — it is not in the nature of ties to be so; and when I think of my loved ones as those to whom I can be a comforter, a help,

I long to be with them again. Otherwise, I can only think with a shudder of returning to England. It looks to me like a land of gloom, of *ennui*, of platitude; but in the midst of all this it is the land of duty and affection, and the only ardent hope I have for my future life is to have given to me some woman's duty, — some possibility of devoting myself where I may see a daily result of pure calm blessedness in the life of another.

How do you look? I hope that *bandeau* of silvery locks is not widening too fast on the head I love so well, — that the eyes are as bright as ever. Your letter tells me they will beam as kindly as ever when I see them once more. Never make apologies about your letters, or your words, or anything else. It is your soul to which I am wedded; and do I not know too well how the soul is doubly belied, — first by the impossibility of being in word and act as great, as loving, as good as it wills to be, and again by the miserable weaknesses of the friends who see the words and acts through all sorts of mists raised by their own passions and preoccupations? In all these matters I am the chief of sinners, and I am tempted to rejoice in the offences of my friends, because they make me feel less humiliation. I am quite satisfied to be at Geneva instead of Paris; in fact, I am becoming passionately attached to the mountains, the lake, the streets, my own room, and, above all, the dear people with whom I live.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 4th Dec. 1849.

A thousand Christmas pleasures and blessings to you, — good resolutions and bright hopes for the New Year! Amen. People who can't be

witty exert themselves to be pious or affectionate. Henceforth I tell you nothing whatever about myself; for if I speak of agreeables, and say I am contented, Mr. Bray writes me word that you are all trying to forget me. If I were to tell you of disagreeables and privations and sadness, Sara would write: "If you are unhappy now, you will be so *à fortiori* ten years hence." Now, since I have a decided objection to doses sent by post which upset one's digestion for a fortnight, I am determined to give you no pretext for sending them. You shall not know whether I am well or ill, contented or discontented, warm or cold, fat or thin. But remember that I am so far from being of the same mind as Mr. Bray, that good news of you is necessary to my comfort. I walk more briskly, and jump out of bed more promptly, after a letter that tells me you are well and comfortable, that business is promising, that men begin to speak well of you, &c. "I am comforted in your comfort," as saith St. Paul to the troublesome Corinthians. When one is cabined, cribbed, confined in one's self, it is good to be enlarged in one's friends. Good Mr. Marshall! We wish to keep even unamiable people when death calls for them, much more good souls like him. I am glad he had had one more pleasant visit to Cara for her to think of. Dear Sara's letter is very charming, — not at all physicky, — rather an agreeable draught of *vin sucré*. Dear Mr. Hennell, we shall never look upon his like.

Letter to the Brays, 23d Dec. 1849.

I am attending a course of lectures on Experimental Physics by M. le Professeur de la Rive, the inventor, amongst other things, of the electroplating. The lectures occur every Wednesday and

Saturday. It is time for me to go. I am distressed to send you this shabby last fragment of paper, and to write in such a hurry, but the days are really only two hours long, and I have so many things to do that I go to bed every night miserable because I have left out something I meant to do. Good-bye, dear souls. Forget me if you like, you cannot oblige me to forget you; and the active is worth twice of the passive all the world over! The earth is covered with snow, and the Government is levelling the fortifications.

Letter to the Brays, 28th Jan. 1850.

You leave me a long time without news of you, though I told you they were necessary as a counteractive to the horrors of this terrible winter. Are you really so occupied as to have absolutely no time to think of me? I console myself, at least to-day, now we have a blue sky once more after two months of mist, with thinking that I am excluded by pleasanter ideas, — that at least you are well and comfortable, and I ought to content myself with that. The fact is, I am much of Touchstone's mind, — in respect my life is at Geneva, I like it very well, but in respect it is not with you, it is a very vile life. I have no yearnings to exchange lake and mountains for Bishop Street and the Radford Fields, but I have a great yearning to kiss you all and talk to you for three days running. I do not think it will be possible for me to undertake the journey before the end of March. I look forward to it with great dread. I see myself looking utterly miserable, ready to leave all my luggage behind me at Paris for the sake of escaping the trouble of it. We have had Alboni here, — a very fat siren. There has been some capital acting of comedies by friends of M. D'Albert, —

one of them is superior to any professional actor of comedy I have ever seen. He reads *vaudevilles* so marvellously that one seems to have a whole troupe of actors before one in his single person. He is a handsome man of fifty, full of wit and talent, and he married about a year ago.

Letter to Mrs. Houghton, 9th Feb. 1850.

It is one of the provoking contrarieties of destiny that I should have written my croaking letter when your own kind consolatory one was on its way to me. I have been happier ever since it came. After mourning two or three months over Chrissey's account of your troubles, I can only dwell on that part of your letter which tells that there is a little more blue in your sky, — that you have faith in the coming Spring. Shall you be as glad to see me as to hear the cuckoo? I mean to return to England as soon as the Jura is passable without sledges, — probably the end of March or beginning of April. I have a little *Heimweh* "as it regards" my friends. I yearn to see those I have loved the longest, but I shall feel real grief at parting from the excellent people with whom I am living. I feel they are my *friends,* — without entering into or even knowing the greater part of my views, they understand my character, and have a real interest in me. I have infinite tenderness from Mme. D'Albert. I call her always "maman;" and she is just the creature one loves to lean on and be petted by. In fact, I am too much indulged, and shall go back to England as undisciplined as ever. This terribly severe winter has been a drawback on my recovering my strength. I have lost whole weeks from headache, &c., but I am certainly better now than when I came to Mme. D'Albert. You tell me to give you these

details, so I obey. Decidedly England is the most comfortable country to be in in winter, — at least for all except those who are rich enough to buy English comforts everywhere. I hate myself for caring about carpets, easy-chairs, and coal fires, — one's soul is under a curse, and can preach no truth while one is in bondage to the flesh in this way; but alas! habit is the purgatory in which we suffer for our past sins. I hear much music. We have a reunion of musical friends every Monday. For the rest I have refused *soirées*, which are as stupid and unprofitable at Geneva as in England. I save all more interesting details, that I may have them to tell you when I am with you. I am going now to a *séance* on Experimental Physics by the celebrated Professor de la Rive. This letter will at least convince you that I am not eaten up by wolves, as they have been fearing at Rosehill. The English papers tell of wolves descending from the Jura and devouring the inhabitants of the villages, but we have been in happy ignorance of these editors' horrors.

If you saw the Jura to-day! The snow reveals its forests, ravines, and precipices, and it stands in relief against a pure blue sky. The snow is on the mountains only now, and one is tempted to walk all day, particularly when one lies in bed till ten, as your exemplary friend sometimes does. I have had no discipline, and shall return to you more of a spoiled child than ever. Indeed I think I am destined to be so to the end, — one of the odious swarm of voracious caterpillars, soon to be swept away from the earth by a tempest. I am getting better bodily. I have much less headache, but the least excitement fatigues me. Certainly if one cannot have

Letter to the Brays, 15th Feb. 1850.

a malady to carry one off rapidly, the only sensible thing is to get well and fat; and I believe I shall be driven to that alternative. You know that George Sand writes for the theatre? Her "François le Champi, — une Comédie," is simplicity and purity itself. The seven devils are cast out. We are going to have more acting here on Wednesday. M. Chancel's talent makes Maman's *soirées* quite brilliant. You will be amused to hear that I am sitting for my portrait, — at M. D'Albert's request, not mine. If it turns out well, I shall long to steal it to give to you; but M. D'Albert talks of painting a second, and in that case I shall certainly beg one. The idea of making a study of my visage is droll enough. I have the kindest possible letters from my brother and sisters, promising me the warmest welcome. This helps to give me courage for the journey; but the strongest magnet of all is a certain little group of three persons whom I hope to find together at Rosehill. Something has been said of M. D'Albert accompanying me to Paris. I am saddened when I think of all the horrible anxieties of trade. If I had children, I would make them carpenters and shoemakers; that is the way to make them Messiahs and Jacob Boehms. As for us who are dependent on carpets and easy-chairs, we are reprobates, and shall never enter into the kingdom of heaven. I go to the Genevese churches every Sunday, and nourish my heterodoxy with orthodox sermons. However, there are some clever men here in the Church, and I am fortunate in being here at a time when the very cleverest is giving a series of conferences. I think I have never told you that we have a long German lad of seventeen in the house, — the most taciturn and awk-

ward of lads. He said very naïvely, when I reproached him for not talking to a German young lady at a *soirée*, when he was seated next her at table, "Je ne savais que faire de mes jambes." They had placed the poor *garçon* against one of those card-tables, — all legs, like himself.

The weather is so glorious that I think I may set out on my journey soon after the 15th. I am not quite certain yet that M. D'Albert will not be able to accompany me to Paris; in any case, a package of so little value will get along safely enough. I am so excited at the idea of the time being so near when I am to leave Geneva, — a real grief, — and see my friends in England, — a perfectly overwhelming joy, — that I can do nothing. I am frightened to think what an idle wretch I am become. And you all do not write me one word to tell me you long for me. I have a great mind to elope to Constantinople, and never see any one any more!

Letter to the Brays, 1st March, 1850.

*It is with a feeling of regret that we take leave of the pleasant town of Geneva, its lake and mountains, and its agreeable little circle of acquaintance. It was a peacefully happy episode in George Eliot's life, and one she was always fond of recurring to, in our talk, up to the end of her life.*

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER IV

JUNE, 1849, TO MARCH, 1850

Goes abroad with Mr. and Mrs. Bray — Geneva — Life at Campagne Plongeon — Letters to Brays describing surroundings — Mrs. Locke — The St. Germain family — Anxiety about her boxes with books, &c. — Hears M. Meunier preach — Patriotism the first of virtues — Mme. Cornelius — Mme. de Ludwigsdorff — "*Fête* of Navigation" on the lake — Demand for letters — Prophetic anticipation of position seven years later — Wishes to sell some of her books and globes to get music lessons — Letter to Mrs. Houghton — Loss of Mrs. Clarke's child — Love of Lake of Geneva — Letters to Brays — Mme. Ludwigsdorff wishes her to spend winter in Paris — Mlle. Faizan — Finds apartment in Geneva, No. 107 Rue des Chanoines, with M. and Mme. D'Albert — Enjoyment of their society — Remarks on translations of Spinoza — Hope of a woman's duty — Attachment to Geneva — Yearning for friends at home — Alboni — Private theatricals — Portrait by M. D'Albert — Remarks on education of children — Leaving Geneva.

# CHAPTER V

*M. D'ALBERT and his charge left Geneva towards the middle of March, and as the railway was not yet opened all the way to France, they had to cross the Jura in sledges, and suffered terribly from the cold. They joined the railway at Tonnerre, and came through Paris, arriving in England on the 23d of March. After a day in London, Miss Evans went straight to her friends at Rosehill, where she stayed for a few days before going on to Griff. It will have been seen that she had set her hopes high on the delights of home-coming, and with her too sensitive, impressionable nature, it is not difficult to understand, without attributing blame to any one, that she was pretty sure to be laying up disappointment for herself. All who have had the experience of returning from a bright sunny climate to England in March will recognise in the next letters the actual presence of the east wind, the leaden sky, the gritty dust, and* le spleen.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, end of March, 1850, from Rosehill.

No; I am not in England, — I am only nearer the beings I love best. I try to forget all geography, and that I have placed myself irretrievably out of reach of nature's brightest glories and beauties to shiver in a wintry flat. I am unspeakably grateful to find these dear creatures looking well and happy, in spite of worldly cares, but your dear face and voice are wanting to me. But I must wait with patience, and perhaps by the time I have finished my visits to my relations, you will be ready to come to Rosehill again. I want you to scold me, and make me good. I am idle and naughty, — *on ne peut plus*,

— sinking into heathenish ignorance and woman's frivolity. Remember, you are one of my guardian angels.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, beginning of April, 1850, from Griff.

Will you send the enclosed note to Mrs. C. Hennell? I am not quite sure about her direction, but I am anxious to thank her for her kindness in inviting me. Will you also send me an account of Mr. Chapman's prices for lodgers, and if you know anything of other boarding-houses, &c., in London? Will you tell me what you can? I am not asking you merely for the sake of giving you trouble. I am really anxious to know. Oh the dismal weather, and the dismal country, and the dismal people. It was some envious demon that drove me across the Jura. However, I am determined to sell everything I possess, except a portmanteau and carpet-bag and the necessary contents, and be a stranger and a foreigner on the earth for evermore. But I must see you first; that is a yearning I still have in spite of disappointments.

*From Griff she went to stay with her sister, Mrs Clarke, at Meriden, whence she writes:*

Letter to Mrs. Bray, 24th April, 1850.

Have you any engagement for the week after next? If not, may I join you on Saturday the 4th, and invite M. D'Albert to come down on the following Monday? It appears he cannot stay in England longer than until about the second week in May. I am uncomfortable at the idea of burthening even your friendship with the entertainment of a person purely for my sake. It is indeed the greatest of all the great kindnesses you have shown me. Write me two or three kind words, dear Cara. I have been so ill at ease ever since I have been in

England that I am quite discouraged. Dear Chrissey is generous and sympathising, and really cares for my happiness.

*On the 4th of May Miss Evans went to Rosehill, and on the 7th M. D'Albert joined the party for a three days' visit. The strong affection existing between Mr. and Mrs. Bray and their guest, and the more congenial intellectual atmosphere surrounding them, led Miss Evans to make her home practically at Rosehill for the next sixteen months. She stayed there continuously till the 18th November, and, among other things, wrote a review of Mackay's "Progress of the Intellect." In October Mr. Mackay and Mr. Chapman, who was then negotiating for the purchase of the "Westminster Review," came to stay at Rosehill, and there was probably some talk then about her assisting in the editorial work of the "Review," but it was not until the following spring that any definite understanding on this subject was arrived at. Meantime the article on Mackay's "Progress of the Intellect" came out in the January, 1851, number of the "Westminster." It contains the following remarkable passages:*

"Our civilisation, and yet more, our religion, are an anomalous blending of lifeless barbarisms, which have descended to us like so many petrifactions from distant ages, with living ideas, the offspring of a true process of development. We are in bondage to terms and conceptions, which, having had their roots in conditions of thought no longer existing, have ceased to possess any vitality, and are for us as spells which have lost their virtue. The endeavour to spread enlightened ideas is perpetually counteracted by these *idola theatri*, which have allied themselves on the one hand with men's better sentiments, and on the other with institutions in whose defence are arrayed the passions and the interests of dominant classes. Now, al-

though the teaching of positive truth is the grand means of expelling error, the process will be very much quickened if the negative argument serve as its pioneer; if, by a survey of the past, it can be shown how each age and each race has had a faith and a symbolism suited to its need and its stage of development, and that for succeeding ages to dream of retaining the spirit along with the forms of the past, is as futile as the embalming of the dead body in the hope that it may one day be resumed by the living soul. . . . It is Mr. Mackay's faith that divine revelation is not contained exclusively or pre-eminently in the facts and inspirations of any one age or nation, but is co-extensive with the history of human development, and is perpetually unfolding itself to our widened experience and investigation, as firmament upon firmament becomes visible to us in proportion to the power and range of our exploring instruments. The master-key to this revelation is the recognition of the presence of undeviating law in the material and moral world, — of that invariability of sequence which is acknowledged to be the basis of physical science, but which is still perversely ignored in our social organisation, our ethics, and our religion. It is this invariability of sequence which can alone give value to experience, and render education, in the true sense, possible. The divine yea and nay, the seal of prohibition and of sanction, are effectually impressed on human deeds and aspirations, not by means of Greek and Hebrew, but by that inexorable law of consequences, whose evidence is confirmed instead of weakened as the ages advance; and human duty is comprised in the earnest study of this law and patient obedience to its teaching. While this belief sheds a

bright beam of promise on the future career of our race, it lights up what once seemed the dreariest region of history with new interest; every past phase of human development is part of that education of the race in which we are sharing; every mistake, every absurdity into which poor human nature has fallen, may be looked on as an experiment of which we may reap the benefit. A correct generalisation gives significance to the smallest detail, just as the great inductions of geology demonstrate in every pebble the working of laws by which the earth has become adapted for the habitation of man. In this view, religion and philosophy are not merely conciliated, they are identical; or rather, religion is the crown and consummation of philosophy, — the delicate corolla which can only spread out its petals in all their symmetry and brilliance to the sun, when root and branch exhibit the conditions of a healthy and vigorous life."

*Miss Evans seems to have been in London from the beginning of January till the end of March, 1851; and Mr. Chapman made another fortnight's visit to Rosehill at the end of May and beginning of June. It was during this period that, with Miss Evans's assistance, the prospectus of the new series of the "Westminster Review" was determined on and put in shape. At the end of July she went with Mrs. Bray to visit Mr. Edward Noel, at Bishop Steignton, in Devonshire. Mrs. Bray had some slight illness there, and Miss Evans writes: —*

I am grieved indeed if anything might have been written, which has not been written, to allay your anxiety about Cara. Her letter yesterday explained what has been the matter. I knew her own handwriting would be pleasanter to you than any other. I have been

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 5th Aug. 1851.

talking to her this morning about the going to London or to Rosehill. She seems to prefer London. A glance or two at the Exposition, she thinks, would do her no harm. To-day we are all going to Teignmouth. She seems to like the idea of sitting by the waves. The sun is shining gloriously, and all things are tolerably promising. I am going to walk on before the rest and have a bath.

*They went to London on the 13th of August, saw the Crystal Palace, and returned to Rosehill on the 16th. At the end of that month, Mr. George Combe (the distinguished phrenologist) arrived on a visit, and he and Mrs. Combe became good friends to Miss Evans, as will be seen from the subsequent correspondence. They came on a second visit to Rosehill the following month, — Mr. Chapman being also in the house at the same time, — and at the end of September Miss Evans went to stay with the Chapmans at No. 142 Strand, as a boarder, and as assistant editor of the "Westminster Review." A new period now opens in George Eliot's life, and emphatically the most important period, for now she is to be thrown in contact with Mr. Lewes, who is to exercise so paramount an influence on all her future, with Mr. Herbert Spencer, and with a number of writers then representing the most fearless and advanced thought of the day. Miss Frederica Bremer, the authoress, was also boarding with the Chapmans at this time, as will be seen from the following letters: —*

Letter to the Brays, end of Sept. 1851.

Mr. Mackay has been very kind in coming and walking out with me, and that is the only variety I have had. Last night, however, we had an agreeable enough gathering. Foxton [1] came, who, you know, is try-

[1] Frederick Foxton, author of "Popular Christianity: its Transition State and Probable Development."

ing, with Carlyle and others, to get a chapel for Wilson at the West End, — in which he is to figure as a seceding clergyman. I enclose you two notes from Empson (he is the editor of the "Edinburgh Review") as a guarantee that I have been trying to work. Again, I proposed to write a review of Greg for the "Westminster," not for money, but for love of the subject as connected with the "Inquiry." Mr. Hickson referred the matter to Slack again, and he writes that he shall not have room for it, and that the subject will not suit on this occasion, so you see I am obliged to be idle, and I like it best. I hope Mr. Bray is coming soon to tell me everything about you. I think I shall cry for joy to see him. But do send me a little note on Monday morning. Mrs. Follen called the other day in extreme horror at Miss Martineau's book.

Letter to Mr. Bray, end of Sept. 1851.

Dr. Brabant returned to Bath yesterday. He very politely took me to the Crystal Palace, the theatre, and the Overland Route. On Friday we had Foxton, Wilson, and some other nice people, among others a Mr. Herbert Spencer, who has just brought out a large work on "Social Statics," which Lewes pronounces the best book he has seen on the subject. You must see the book if possible. Mr. Chapman is going to send you Miss Martineau's work, or rather Mr. Atkinson's,[1] which you must review in the "Herald." Whatever else one may think of the book, it is certainly the boldest I have seen in the English language. I get nothing done here, there are so many *distractions*, — moreover I have hardly been well a day since I came. I wish I were rich enough to go to the coast, and

[1] "Man's Nature and Development," by Martineau and Atkinson.

have some plunges in the sea to brace me. Nevertheless do not suppose that I don't enjoy being here. I like seeing the new people, &c., and I am afraid I shall think the country rather dull after it. I am in a hurry to-day. I must have two hours' work before dinner; so imagine everything I have not said, or rather reflect that this scrap is quite as much as you deserve after being so slow to write to me.

*The reference, in the above letter, to Mr. Lewes must not be taken as indicating personal acquaintance yet. It is only a quotation of some opinion heard or read. Mr. Lewes had already secured for himself a wide reputation in the literary world by his "Biographical History of Philosophy," his two novels, "Ranthorpe," and "Rose, Blanche, and Violet," — all of which had been published five or six years before, — and his voluminous contributions to the periodical literature of the day. He was also at this time the literary editor of the "Leader" newspaper, so that any criticism of his would carry weight and be talked about. Much has already been written about his extraordinary versatility, the variety of his literary productions, his social charms, his talent as a* raconteur, *and his dramatic faculty; and it will now be interesting, for those who did not know him personally, to learn the deeper side of his character, which will be seen, in its development, in the following pages.*

I don't know how long Miss Bremer will stay, but you need not wish to see her. She is to me equally unprepossessing to eye and ear. I never saw a person of her years who appealed less to my purely instinctive veneration. I have to reflect every time I look at her that she is really Frederica Bremer.

Fox is to write the article on the Suffrage, and we are going to try Carlyle for the Peerage, Ward refusing on the ground that he thinks the improve-

ment of the physical condition of the people so all-important that he must give all his energies to that. He says, "Life is a bad business, but we must make the best of it;" to which philosophy I say Amen. Dr. Hodgson is gone, and all the fun with him.

I was introduced to Lewes the other day in Jeff's shop, — a sort of miniature Mirabeau in appearance.[1]

Professor Forbes is to write us a capital scientific article, whereat I rejoice greatly. The Peerage apparently will not "get itself done," as Carlyle says. It is not an urgent question, nor does one see that, if the undue influence of the Peers on the elections for the Commons were done away with, there would be much mischief from the House of Lords remaining for some time longer *in statu quo*. I have been reading Carlyle's "Life of Sterling" with great pleasure, — not for its presentation of Sterling, but of Carlyle. There are racy bits of description in his best manner, and exquisite touches of feeling. Little rapid characterisations of living men too, — of Francis Newman, for example, — "a man of fine university and other attainments, of the sharpest cutting, and most restlessly advancing intellect, and of the mildest pious enthusiasm." There is an inimitable description of Coleridge and his eternal monologue, — "To sit as a passive bucket and be pumped into, whether one like it or not, can in the end be exhilarating to no creature."

Letter to the Brays, 2d Oct. (?) 1851.

All the world is doing its *devoir* to the great

[1] This was a merely formal and casual introduction. That George Eliot was ever brought into close relations with Mr. Lewes was due to Mr. Herbert Spencer having taken him to call on her in the Strand later in this year.

little authoress (Miss Bremer). I went to the Exhibition on Saturday to hear the final "God save the Queen" and the three times three, — "C'était un beau moment." Mr. Greg thought the review "well done, and in a kindly spirit," but thought there was not much in it, — dreadfully true, since there was only all his book. I think he did not like the apology for his want of theological learning, which, however, was just the thing most needed, for the "Eclectic" trips him up on that score. Carlyle was very amusing the other morning to Mr. Chapman about the Exhibition. He has no patience with the Prince and "that Cole" assembling Sawneys from all parts of the land, till you can't get along Piccadilly. He has been worn to death with bores all summer, who present themselves by twos and threes in his study, saying, "Here we are," &c., &c.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 15th Oct. 1851.

I wish you could see Miss Bremer's albums, full of portraits, flowers, and landscapes, all done by herself. A portrait of Emerson, marvellously like; one of Jenny Lind, &c. Last night we had quite a charming *soirée*, — Sir David Brewster and his daughter; Mackay, author of a work on popular education, you may remember to have seen reviewed in the "Leader;" the Ellises, the Hodgsons, and half-a-dozen other nice people. Miss Bremer was more genial than I have seen her, — played on the piano, and smiled benevolently. Altogether, I am beginning to repent of my repugnance. Mackay approves our prospectus *in toto*. He is a handsome, fine-headed man, and a "good opinion." We are getting out a circular to accompany the prospectus. I have been kept downstairs by Mr. Mackay for

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 19th Oct. 1851.

the last two hours, and am hurried, but it was a necessity to write *ein paar Worte* to you. Mr. Mackay has written an account of his book for the catalogue. I have been using my powers of eloquence and flattery this morning to make him begin an article on the "Development of Protestantism." Mr. Ellis was agreeable, — really witty. He and Mrs. Ellis particularly cordial to me, inviting me to visit them without ceremony. I love you all better every day, and better the more I see of other people. I am going to one of the Birkbeck schools.

I must tell you a story Miss Bremer got from Emerson. Carlyle was very angry with him for not believing in a devil, and to convert him took him amongst all the horrors of London, — the gin-shops, &c., — and finally to the House of Commons, plying him at every turn with the question, "Do you believe in a devil noo?" There is a severe attack on Carlyle's "Life of Sterling" in yesterday's "Times," — unfair as an account of the book, but with some truth in its general remarks about Carlyle. There is an article, evidently by James Martineau, in the "Prospective," which you must read, "On the Unity of the Logical and Intuitive in the ultimate grounds of Religious Belief." I am reading with great amusement (!) J. H. Newman's "Lectures on the Position of Catholics." They are full of clever satire and description. My table is groaning with books, and I have done very little with them yet, but I trust in my star, which has hitherto helped me, to do all I have engaged to do. Pray remember to send the MS. translation of Schleiermacher's little book, and also the book itself.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 3d Nov. 1851.

When Mr. Noel had finished his farewell visit to-day, Mr. Flower was announced, so my morning has run away in chat. Time wears, and I don't get on so fast as I ought, but I must scribble a word or two, else you will make my silence an excuse for writing me no word of yourselves. I am afraid Mr. Noel and Mr. Bray have given you a poor report of me. The last two days I have been a little better, but I hardly think existing arrangements can last beyond this quarter. Mr. Noel says Miss L. is to visit you at Christmas. I hope that is a mistake, as it would deprive me of my hoped-for rest amongst you.

Letter to the Brays, 15th Nov. 1851.

On Saturday afternoon came Mr. Spencer to ask Mr. Chapman and me to go to the theatre; so I ended the day in a godless manner, seeing the "Merry Wives of Windsor." You must read Carlyle's denunciation of the opera, published in the "Keepsake"! The "Examiner" quotes it at length. I send you the enclosed from Harriet Martineau. Please to return it. The one from Carlyle you may keep till I come. He is a naughty fellow to write in the "Keepsake," and not for us, after I wrote him the most insinuating letter, offering him three glorious subjects. Yesterday we went to Mr. Mackay's, Dr. Brabant being there.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, Monday, 23d Nov. 1851.

Carlyle called the other day, strongly recommending Browning, the poet, as a writer for the "Review," and saying, "We shall see," about himself. In other respects we have been stagnating since Monday, and now I must work, work, work, which I have scarcely done two days consecutively since I have been here. Lewes says his article on "Julia von

Letter to Chas. Bray, 27th Nov. 1851.

Krüdener "[1] will be glorious. He sat in the same box with us at the "Merry Wives of Windsor," and helped to carry off the dolorousness of the play.

Alas! the work is so heavy just for the next three days, all the revises being yet to come in, and the proof of my own article;[2] and Mr. Chapman is so overwhelmed with matters of detail, that he has earnestly requested me to stay till Saturday, and I cannot refuse, but it is a deep disappointment to me. My heart will yearn after you all. It is the first Christmas Day I shall have passed without any Christmas feeling. On Saturday, if you will have me, nothing shall keep me here any longer. I am writing at a high table, on a low seat, in a great hurry. Don't you think my style is editorial?

Letter to the Brays, Tuesday, 22d Dec. 1851.

*Accordingly, on Saturday, the 29th December, 1851, she did go down to Rosehill, and stayed there till 12th January, when she returned to London, and writes: —*

I had a comfortable journey all alone, except from Weedon to Blisworth. When I saw a coated animal getting into my carriage, I thought of all horrible stories of madmen in railways; but his white neckcloth and thin mincing voice soon convinced me that he was one of those exceedingly tame animals, the clergy.

Letter to Mrs. Bray, 12th Jan. 1852.

A kind welcome and a good dinner, — that is the whole of my history at present. I am in anything but company trim, or spirits. I can do nothing in return for all your kindness, dear Cara, but love you, as I do most heartily. You and all yours, for their own sake first, but if it were not so, for yours.

[1] Appeared in January, 1852, No. of the "Westminster Review," No. 1 of the New Series.

[2] Review of Carlyle's "Life of Sterling" in "Westminster," Jan. 1852.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 21st Jan. 1852.

Harriet Martineau called on Monday morning with Mr. Atkinson. Very kind and cordial. I honour her for her powers and industry, and should be glad to think highly of her. I have no doubt that she is fascinating when there is time for talk. We have had two agreeable *soirées*. Last Monday I was talking and listening for two hours to Pierre Leroux, — a dreamy genius. He was expounding to me his ideas. He belongs neither to the school of Proudhon, which represents Liberty only, — nor to that of Louis Blanc, which represents Equality only, — nor to that of Cabet, which represents Fraternity. Pierre Leroux's system is the *synthèse* which combines all three. He has found the true *pont* which is to unite the love of self with the love of one's neighbour. He is, you know, a very voluminous writer. George Sand has dedicated some of her books to him. He dilated on his views of the "Origin of Christianity." Strauss deficient, because he has not shown the *identity of the teaching of Jesus with that of the Essenes.* This is Leroux's favourite idea. I told him of your brother. He, moreover, traces Essenism back to Egypt, and thence to India, — the cradle of all religions, &c., &c., with much more, which he uttered with an unction rather amusing in a *soirée tête-à-tête.* "Est-ce que nous sommes faits pour chercher le bonheur? Est-ce là votre idée — dites moi." "Mais non, — nous sommes faits, je pense, pour nous développer le plus possible." "Ah! c'est ça." He is in utter poverty, going to lecture, — *autrement il faut mourir.* Has a wife and children with him. He came to London in his early days, when he was twenty-five, — to find work as a printer. All the world was in mourning for the

Princess Charlotte. "Et moi, je me trouvais avoir *un habit vert-pomme*." So he got no work; went back to Paris; by hook or by crook founded the "Globe" journal; knew St. Simon; disagrees with him entirely, as with all other theorists except Pierre Leroux.

We are trying Mazzini to write on "Freedom *v.* Despotism," and have received an admirable article on "The New Puritanism," [1] *i. e.*, "Physical Puritanism," from Dr. Brown, the chemist, of Edinburgh, which, I think, will go in the next number.

I am in a miserable state of languor and low spirits, in which everything is a trouble to me. I must tell you a bit of Louis Blanc's English, which Mr. Spencer was reciting the other night. The *petit homme* called on some one, and said, "I come to tell you how you are. I was at you the other day, but you were not."

Letter to the Brays, 2d Feb. 1852.

We went to quite a gay party at Mrs. Mackay's on Saturday. Good Mr. Mackay has been taking trouble to get me to Hastings for my health, — calling on Miss Fellowes, daughter of the "Religion of the Universe," and inducing her to write me a note of invitation. Sara will be heartily welcome. Unfortunately I had an invitation to the Parkes', to meet Cobden on Saturday evening. I was sorry to miss that. Miss Parkes [2] is a dear, ardent, honest creature; and I hope we shall be good friends. I have nothing else to tell you. I am steeped in dulness within and without. Heaven send some lions to-night to meet Fox, who is coming. An

[1] Published in the April, 1852, number of the "Westminster."

[2] Now Madame Belloc, who remained to the end one of George Eliot's closest friends.

advertisement we found in the " Times " to-day, — " To gentlemen. A *converted* medical man, of gentlemanly habits and fond of Scriptural conversation, wishes to meet with a gentleman of Calvinistic views, thirsty after truth, in want of a daily companion. A little temporal aid will be expected in return. Address, Verax "!

Letter to Mrs. Bray, 8th Feb. 1852.

We are going to Mr. Ellis's, at Champion Hill, to-morrow evening. I am better now. Have rid myself of all distasteful work, and am trying to love the glorious destination of humanity, looking before and after. We shall be glad to have Sara.

*Miss Sara Hennell arrived on a visit to the Strand next day — the 9th February — and stayed till the 17th.*

Letter to Mr. Bray, 16th Feb. 1852.

I have not merely had a headache, — I have been really ill, and feel very much shattered. We (Miss Evans and Miss Sara Hennell) dined yesterday at Mrs. Peter Taylor's,[1] at Sydenham. I was not fit to go, especially to make my *début* at a strange place; but the country air was a temptation. The thick of the work is just beginning, and I am bound in honour not to run away from it, as I have shirked all labour but what is strictly editorial this quarter.

Letter to Mrs. Bray, 20th Feb. 1852.

We went to the meeting of the Association for the Abolition of the Taxes on Knowledge on Wednesday, that I might hear Cobden, in whom I was wofully disappointed. George Dawson's speech was admirable. I think it undesirable to fix on a London residence

[1] Mrs. Peter Taylor remained a lifelong and a valued friend of George Eliot's, and many interesting letters in these volumes are addressed to her. I am glad also to take this opportunity of expressing my thanks to her for obtaining for me two other sets of correspondence, — the letters addressed to Mrs. Beecher Stowe and to Mrs. William Smith.

at present, as I want to go to Brighton for a month or two next quarter. I am seriously concerned at my languid body, and feel the necessity of taking some measures to get vigour. Lewes inquired for Sara last Monday in a tone of interest. He was charmed with her, as who would not be that has any taste? Do write to me, dear Cara; I want comforting: this world looks ugly just now; all people rather worse than I have been used to think them. Put me in love with my kind again, by giving me a glimpse of your own inward self, since I cannot see the outer one.

I can sympathise with you in your troubles, having been a housekeeper myself, and known disappointment in trusted servants. Ah, well! we have a good share of the benefits of our civilisation; it is but fair that we should feel some of the burthen of its imperfections.

Letter to Mrs. Peter Taylor, 6th March, 1852.

Thank you a thousand times for wishing to see me again. I should really like to see you in your own nice, fresh, healthy-looking home again; but until the end of March I fear I shall be a prisoner from the necessity for constant work. Still it is possible that I may have a day, though I am quite unable to say when.

You will be still more surprised at the notice of the "Westminster" in "The People," when you know that Maccall himself wrote it. I have not seen it, but had been told of its ill-nature. However, he is too good a man to write otherwise than sincerely; and our opinion of a book often depends on the state of the liver!

I had two offers last night, — not of marriage, but of music, — which I find it impossible to re-

sist. Mr. Herbert Spencer proposed to take me on Thursday to hear "William Tell," and Miss Parkes asked me to go with her to hear the "Creation" on Friday. I have had so little music this quarter, and these two things are so exactly what I should like, that I have determined to put off, for the sake of them, my other pleasure of seeing you. So, pray, keep your precious welcome warm for me until Saturday, when I shall positively set off by the two o'clock train. Harriet Martineau has written me a most cordial invitation to go to see her before July, but that is impossible.

Letter to Mrs. Bray, 25th March, 1852.

I am grieved to find that you have to pay for that fine temperament of yours in attacks of neuralgia. Your silence did not surprise me, after the account you had given me of your domestic circumstances, but I have wished for you on Monday evenings. Your cordial assurance that you shall be glad to see me sometimes is one of those pleasant things — those life-preservers — which relenting destiny sends me now and then to buoy me up. For you must know that I am not a little desponding now and then, and think that old friends will die off, while I shall be left without the power to make new ones. You know how sad one feels when a great procession has swept by one, and the last notes of its music have died away, leaving one alone with the fields and sky. I feel so about life sometimes. It is a help to read such a life as Margaret Fuller's. How inexpressibly touching that passage from her journal, — "I shall always reign through the intellect, but the life! the life! O my God! shall that never be sweet?" I am thankful, as if for myself, that it was sweet at last. But I am running on

Letter to Mrs. Peter Taylor, 27th March, 1852.

about feelings when I ought to tell you facts. I am going on Wednesday to my friends in Warwickshire for about ten days or a fortnight. When I come back, I hope you will be quite strong and able to receive visitors without effort, — Mr. Taylor too.

I *did* go to the *conversazione;* but you have less to regret than you think. Mazzini's speeches are better read than heard Proofs are come demanding my immediate attention, so I must end this hasty scribble.

*On the 3d April Miss Evans went to Rosehill, and stayed till the 14th. On her return she writes:*

There was an article on the bookselling affair in the "Times" of yesterday, which must be the knell of the Association. Dickens is to preside at a meeting in this house on the subject some day next week. The opinions on the various articles in the "Review" are, as before, ridiculously various. The "Economist" calls the article on Quakerism "admirably written." Greg says the article on India is "very masterly;" while he calls Mazzini's "sad stuff, — mere verbiage."

Letter to Mr. Bray, 17th April, 1852.

If there is any change in my affection for you, it is that I love you more than ever, not less. I have as perfect a friendship for you as my imperfect nature can feel, — a friendship in which deep respect and admiration are sweetened by a sort of flesh-and-blood sisterly feeling and the happy consciousness that I have your affection, however undeservedly, in return. I have confidence that this friendship can never be shaken; that it must last while I last, and that the supposition of its ever being weakened

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 21st April, 1852.

by a momentary irritation is too contemptibly absurd for me to take the trouble to deny it. As to your whole conduct to me, from the first day I knew you, it has been so generous and sympathetic that if I did not heartily love you, I should feel deep gratitude, — but love excludes gratitude. It is impossible that I should ever love two women better than I love you and Cara. Indeed it seems to me that I can never love any so well; and it is certain that I can never have any friend — not even a husband — who would supply the loss of those associations with the past which belong to you. Do believe in my love for you, and that it will remain as long as I have my senses, because it is interwoven with my best nature, and is dependent not on any accidents of manner but on long experience, which has confirmed the instinctive attraction of earlier days.

Our fortunes here are as usual chequered, —

> "Twist ye, twine ye, even so
> Mingle human weal and woe."

Grote is very friendly, and has propitiated J. S. Mill, who will write for us when we want him.

Letter to the Brays, 22d April, 1852.

We had quite a brilliant *soirée* yesterday evening, W. R. Greg, Forster (of Rawdon), Francis Newman, the Ellises, and Louis Blanc were the stars of greatest magnitude. I had a pleasant talk with Greg and Forster. Greg was "much pleased to have made my acquaintance." Forster, on the whole, appeared to think that people should be glad to make *his* acquaintance. Greg is a short man, but his brain is large, the anterior lobe very fine, and a moral region to correspond. Black, wiry, curly hair, and every indication of a first-rate tempera-

ment. We have some very nice Americans here, — the Pughs, friends of the Parkes', really refined, intellectual people. Miss Pugh, an elderly lady, is a great abolitionist, and was one of the Women's Convention that came to England in 1840, and was not allowed to join the Men's Convention. But I suppose we shall soon be able to say, *nous avons changé tout cela.*

I went to the opera on Saturday, — "I Martiri," at Covent Garden, — with my "excellent friend, Herbert Spencer," as Lewes calls him. We have agreed that there is no reason why we should not have as much of each other's society as we like. He is a good, delightful creature, and I always feel better for being with him.

I like to remind you of me on Sunday morning, when you look at the flowers and listen to music; so I send a few lines, though I have not much time to spare to-day. After Tuesday I will write you a longer letter, and tell you all about everything. I am going to the opera to-night to hear the "Huguenots." See what a fine thing it is to pick up people who are short-sighted enough to like one!

Letter to the Brays, 2d May, 1852.

*On the 4th of May a meeting, consisting chiefly of authors, was held at the house in the Strand, for the purpose of hastening the removal of the trade restrictions on the Commerce of Literature, and it is thus described in the following letter: —*

The meeting last night went off triumphantly, and I saluted Mr. Chapman with "See the Conquering Hero comes" on the piano at 12 o'clock; for not until then was the last magnate, except Herbert Spencer, out of the house. I sat at the door for a short time, but

Letter to the Brays, 5th May, 1852.

soon got a chair within it, and heard and saw everything.

Dickens in the chair, — a position he fills remarkably well, preserving a courteous neutrality of eyebrows, and speaking with clearness and decision. His appearance is certainly disappointing, — no benevolence in the face, and, I think, little in the head, — the anterior lobe not by any means remarkable. In fact, he is not distinguished looking in any way, — neither handsome nor ugly, neither fat nor thin, neither tall nor short. Babbage moved the first resolution, — a bad speaker, but a great authority. Charles Knight is a beautiful, elderly man, with a modest but firm enunciation; and he made a wise and telling speech which silenced one or two vulgar, ignorant booksellers who had got into the meeting by mistake. One of these began by complimenting Dickens, — " views held by such worthy and important gentlemen, *which is your worthy person in the chair.*" Dickens looked respectfully neutral. The most telling speech of the evening was Prof. Tom Taylor's, — as witty and brilliant as one of George Dawson's. Professor Owen's, too, was remarkably good. He had a resolution to move as to the bad effect of the trade restrictions on scientific works, and gave his own experience in illustration. Speaking of the slow and small sale of scientific books of a high class, he said, in his silvery bland way, alluding to the boast that the retail booksellers *recommended* the works of less known authors, — " for which limited sale we are doubtless indebted to the kind recommendation of our friends, the retail booksellers," — whereupon these worthies, taking it for a *bonâ fide* compliment, cheered enthusiastically. Dr. Lankester, Prof. Newman, Robert Bell, and

others spoke well. Owen has a tremendous head, and looked, as he was, the greatest celebrity of the meeting. George Cruikshank, too, made a capital speech in an admirable moral spirit. He is the most homely, genuine-looking man, not unlike the pictures of Captain Cuttle.

I went to hear the "Huguenots" on Saturday evening. It was a rich treat. Mario, and Grisi, and Formes, and that finest of orchestras under Costa. I am going to a concert to-night. This is all very fine, but in the meantime I am getting as haggard as an old witch under London atmosphere and influences. I shall be glad to have sent me my Shakspeare, Goethe, Byron, and Wordsworth, if you will be so good as to take the trouble of packing them.

Letter to the Brays, Monday, 12th (?) May, 1852.

My days have slipt away in a most mysterious fashion lately, — chiefly, I suppose, in long walks and long talks. Our Monday evenings are dying off, — not universally regretted, — but we are expecting one or two people to-night. I have nothing to tell except that I went to the opera on Thursday, and heard "La Juive," and, moreover, fell in love with Prince Albert, who was unusually animated and prominent. He has a noble, genial, intelligent expression, and is altogether a man to be proud of. I am going next Thursday to see Grisi in "Norma." She is quite beautiful this season, thinner than she was, and really younger looking.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 27th May, 1852.

My brightest spot, next to my love of *old* friends, is the deliciously calm *new* friendship that Herbert Spencer gives me. We see each other every day, and have a delightful *cameraderie* in everything. But for him my life would be desolate enough. What a wretched

lot of old shrivelled creatures we shall be by-and-by! Never mind, — the uglier we get in the eyes of others, the lovelier we shall be to each other; that has always been my firm faith about friendship, and now it is in a slight degree my experience. Mme. D'Albert has sent me the sweetest letter, just like herself; and I feel grateful to have such a heart remembering and loving me on the other side of the Jura. They are very well and flourishing.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, Wednesday, 2d June, 1852.

I am bothered to death with article-reading and scrap-work of all sorts: it is clear my poor head will never produce anything under these circumstances; *but I am patient.* I am ashamed to tease you so, but I must beg of you to send me George Sand's works; and also I shall be grateful if you will lend me, what I think you have, — an English edition of " Corinne," and Miss Austen's " Sense and Sensibility." Harriet Martineau's article on " Niebuhr " will not go in the July number. I am sorry for it, — it is admirable. After all, she is a *trump*, — the only Englishwoman that possesses thoroughly the art of writing.

On Thursday morning I went to St. Paul's to see the Charity children assembled, and hear their singing. Berlioz says it is the finest thing he has heard in England; and this opinion of his induced me to go. I was not disappointed, — it is worth doing once, especially as we got out before the sermon. I had a long call from George Combe yesterday. He says he thinks the " Westminster," under *my* management, the most important means of enlightenment of a literary nature in existence, — the " Edinburgh," under Jeffrey, nothing to it, &c. !!! I wish *I* thought so too.

Your joint assurance of welcome strengthens the centripetal force that would carry me to you; but, on the other hand, sundry considerations are in favour of the centrifugal force, which, I suppose, will carry me to Broadstairs or Ramsgate. On the whole, I prefer to keep my visit to you as a *bonne bouche*, when I am just in the best physical and mental state for enjoying it. I hope to get away on Saturday, or on Wednesday at the latest. I think the third number of the "Review" will be capital, — thoroughly readable, and yet not frothy.

Letter to the Brays, 21st June, 1852.

I have assured Herbert Spencer that you will think it a sufficiently formal answer to the invitation you sent him through Mr. Lewes, if I tell you that he will prefer waiting for the pleasure of a visit to you until I am with you, — if you will have him then. I spent the evening at Mr. Parkes's on Monday. Yesterday Herbert Spencer brought his father to see me, — a large-brained, highly informed man, with a certain quaintness and simplicity, altogether very pleasing.

Letter to Chas. Bray, 23d June, 1852.

After all, I begin to hope that our next number will be the best yet. Forbes is good. Froude ditto; and James Martineau, if I may judge from a glance at a few of his pages, admirable. Lewes has written us an agreeable article on Lady Novelists. There is a mysterious contribution to the Independent section. We are hoping that an article on Edinburgh Literary Men, yet to come, will be very good. If not, we shall put in Niebuhr; it is capital.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 25th June, (?) 1852.

The opera, Chiswick Flower Show, the French play, and the Lyceum, all in one week, brought

their natural consequences of headache and hysterics, — all yesterday. At five o'clock I felt quite sure that life was unendurable. This morning, however, the weather and I are both better, having cried ourselves out and used up all our clouds; and I can even contemplate living six months longer. Was there ever anything more dreary than this June?

Letter to the Brays, end of June, 1852.

I am busy packing to-day, and am going to Mr. Parkes's to dinner. Miss Parkes has introduced me to Barbara Smith,[1] whose expression I like exceedingly, and hope to know more of her. I go to Broadstairs on Saturday. I am sadly in want of the change, and would much rather present myself to you all when I can do you more credit as a friend.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, Friday morning, 2d July, 1852.

I warn you against Ramsgate, which is a strip of London come out for an airing. Broadstairs is perfect; and I have the snuggest little lodging conceivable, with a motherly good woman and a nice little damsel of fourteen to wait on me. There are only my two rooms in this cottage, but lodgings are plentiful in the place. I have a sitting-room about 8 feet by 9, and a bedroom a little larger; yet in that small space there is almost every comfort. I pay a guinea a week for my rooms, so I shall not ruin myself by staying a month, unless I commit excesses in coffee and sugar. I am thinking whether it would not be wise to retire from the world and live here for the rest of my days. With some fresh paper on the walls and an easy-chair, I think I

Letter to Mrs. Bray, 4th July, 1852.

[1] Afterwards Madame Bodichon, — one of the three or four most intimate friends of George Eliot, whose name will very often appear in subsequent pages.

could resign myself. Come and tell me your opinion.

I thought of you last night, when I was in a state of mingled rapture and torture, — rapture at the sight of a glorious evening sky, torture at the sight and hearing of the belabouring given to the poor donkey which was drawing me from Ramsgate home.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 16th July, 1852.

I had a note from Miss Florence Nightingale yesterday. I was much pleased with her. There is a loftiness of mind about her which is well expressed by her form and manner. Glad you are pleased with the "Westminster." I do think it a rich number, — matter for a fortnight's reading and thought. Lewes has not half done it justice in the "Leader." To my mind the Niebuhr article is as good as any of them. If you could see me in my quiet nook! I am half ashamed of being in such clover, both spiritually and materially, while some of my friends are on the dusty highways, without a tuft of grass or a flower to cheer them. A letter from you will be delightful. We seem to have said very little to each other lately. But I always know — rejoice to know — that there is the same Sara for me as there is the same green earth and arched sky, when I am good and wise enough to like the best thing.

Do not be anxious about me, — there is no cause. I am profiting, body and mind, from quiet walks and talks with nature, gathering "Lady's Bedstraw" and "Rest-harrow," and other pretty things; picking up shells (not in the Newtonian sense, but literally); reading Aristotle, to find out what is the chief good; and eating mutton-chops, that I may have strength to pursue it. If you insist on my

Letter to Chas. Bray, 21st July, 1852.

writing about "Emotions," why, I must get some up expressly for the purpose. But I must own I would rather not, for it is the grand wish and object of my life to get rid of them as far as possible, seeing they have already had more than their share of my nervous energy. I shall not be in town on the 2d of August, — at least I pray heaven to forbid it.

*Mrs. Bray paid a visit to Broadstairs from the 3d to the 12th August, and the next letter is addressed to her.*

Letter to Mrs. Bray, Thursday, 14th (?) Aug. 1852.

Are you really the better for having been here? Since you left, I have been continually regretting that I could not make your visit pleasanter. I was irritable and out of sorts; but you have an apparatus for secreting happiness, that 's it. Providence, seeing that I wanted weaning from this place, has sent a swarm of harvest-bugs and lady-birds. These, with the half-blank, half-dissipated feeling which comes on after having companions and losing them, make me think of returning to London on Saturday week with more resignation than I have felt before. I am very well and "plucky," — a word which I propose to substitute for "happy," as more truthful.

Letter to Mrs. Peter Taylor, 19th Aug. 1852.

For the last two months I have been at this pretty, quiet place, which "David Copperfield" has made classic, far away from London noise and smoke.

I am sorry now that I brought with me Fox's Lectures, which I had not managed to read before I left town. But I shall return thither at the end of next week, and I will at once forward the volume to Cary Lane.

One sees no novels less than a year old at the sea-side, so I am unacquainted with the "Blithe-

dale Romance," except through the reviews, which have whetted my curiosity more than usual. Hawthorne is a grand favourite of mine, and I shall be sorry if he do not go on surpassing himself. It is sad to hear of your only going out to consult a physician. Illness seems to me the one woe for which there is no comfort, — no compensation. But perhaps you find it otherwise, for you have a less rebellious spirit than I, and suffering seems to make you look all the more gentle.

Letter to Mrs. Houghton, 22d Aug. 1852.

Thinking of you this morning, — as I often do, though you may not suppose so, — it was " borne in on my mind " that I must write to you, and I obey the inspiration without waiting to consider whether there may be a corresponding desire on your part to hear from me. I live in a world of cares and joys, so remote from the one in which we used to sympathise with each other, that I find positive communication with you difficult. But I am not unfaithful to old loves, — they were sincere, and they are lasting. I hope you will not think it too much trouble to write me a little news of yourself. I want very much to know if your health continues good, and if there has been any change in your circumstances, that I may have something like a true conception of you. All is well with me so far as my individuality is concerned, — but I have plenty of friends' troubles to sorrow over. I hope you have none to add to the number.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 29th Aug. 1852.

I celebrated my return to London by the usual observance, — that is to say, a violent headache, which is not yet gone, and of course I am in the worst spirits, and my opinion of things is not worth a straw. I tell you this that you may know why I only send you

this scrap instead of the long letter which I have *in petto* for you, and which would otherwise have been written yesterday.

Somehow my letters — except those which come under the inexorable imperative *must* (the "ought" I manage well enough to shirk) — will not get written. The fact is, I am in a croaking mood, and I am waiting and waiting for it to pass by; so if my pen croaks in spite of my resolutions to the contrary, please to take no notice of it. Ever since I came back, I have felt something like the madness which imagines that the four walls are contracting and going to crush one. Harriet Martineau (in a private letter shown to me), with incomprehensible ignorance, jeers at Lewes for introducing *psychology* as a science in his Comte papers. Why, Comte himself holds psychology to be a necessary link in the chain of science. Lewes only suggests a change in its relations. There is a great dreary article on the Colonies by my side asking for reading and abridgment, so I cannot go on scribbling, — indeed my hands are so hot and tremulous this morning that it will be better for you if I leave off. Your little loving notes are very precious to me; but I say nothing about matters of feeling till my good genius has returned from his excursions: the evil one has possession just now.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 2d Sept. 1852.

The week has really yielded nothing worth telling you. I am a few degrees more wizened and muddle-headed; and the articles for the "Review" are on the whole unsatisfactory. I fear a discerning public will think this number a sad falling off. This is the greater pity, that said public is patronising us well at present. Scarcely a day passes that some

Letter to Mrs. Bray, 11th Sept. 1852.

one does not write to order the "Review" as a permanent subscriber. You may as well expect news from an old spider or bat as from me. I can only tell you what I think of the "Blithedale Romance," of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," and the American Fishery Dispute, — all which, I am very sure, you don't want to know. Do have pity on me, and make a little variety in my life, by all sending me a scrap, — never mind if it be only six lines apiece. Perhaps something will befall me one day or other. As it is, nothing happens to me but the ringing of the dinner-bell and the arrival of a proof. I have no courage to walk out.

Letter to Chas. Bray, 18th Sept. 1852.

Lewes called on me the other day, and told me of a conversation with Professor Owen, in which the latter declared his conviction that the cerebrum was not the organ of the mind, but the cerebellum rather. He founds on the enormous comparative size of brain in the grampus! The professor has a huge anterior lobe of his own. What would George Combe say if I were to tell him? But every great man has his paradox, and that of the first anatomist in Europe ought to be a startling one.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, Saturday, Sept. 1852.

We shall make a respectable figure after all, — nine articles, and two or three of them good, the rest not bad. The "Review" has been selling well lately, in spite of its being the end of the quarter. We have made splendid provision for January, — Froude, Harriet Martineau, Theodore Parker, Samuel Brown, &c., &c. The autumnal freshness of the mornings makes me dream of mellowing woods and gossamer threads. I am really longing for my journey. Bessie Parkes spent last evening with me chatting of experience.

Pity me, — I have had the headache for four days incessantly. But now I am well, and even the Strand seems an elysium by contrast. I set off on Tuesday for Edinburgh by express. This is awfully expensive, but it seems the only way of reaching there alive with my frail body. I have had the kindest notes from the Combes and from Harriet Martineau.

Letter to the Brays, 2d Oct. 1852.

Here I am in this beautiful Auld Reekie once more, — hardly recognising myself for the same person as the *damozel* who left it by the coach with a heavy heart some six years ago. The Combes are all kindness, and I am in clover, — an elegant house, glorious fires, and a comfortable carriage, — in short, just in the circumstances to nourish sleek optimism, convince one that this is *le meilleur des mondes possibles,* and make one shudder at the impiety of all who doubt it. Last evening Mr. Robert Cox came to tea to be introduced to me as my *cicerone* through the lions of Edinburgh. The talk last night was pleasant enough, though of course all the interlocutors besides Mr. Combe have little to do but shape elegant modes of negation and affirmation, like the people who are talked to by Socrates in Plato's dialogues, — "Certainly," "That I firmly believe," &c. I have a beautiful view from my room window, — masses of wood, distant hills, the Firth, and four splendid buildings, dotted far apart, — not an ugly object to be seen. When I look out in the morning, it is as if I had waked up in Utopia or Icaria, or one of Owen's parallelograms. The weather is perfect, — all the more delightful to me for its northern sharpness, which is just what I wanted to brace me. I have been out walking and

Letter to the Brays, 7th Oct. 1852.

driving all day, and have only time before dinner to send this *paar Worte*, but I may have still less time to-morrow.

Between the beauty of the weather and the scenery, and the kindness of good people, I am tipsy with pleasure. But I shall tell you nothing of what I see and do, because that would be taking off some of the edge from your pleasure in seeing me. One's dear friend who has nothing at all to tell one is a bore. Is it not so, honour bright? I enjoy talking to Mr. Combe, — he can tell me many things, especially about men in America and elsewhere, which are valuable; and besides, I sometimes manage to get in more than a negative or affirmative. He and Mrs. Combe are really affectionate to me, and the mild warmth of their regard, with the perfect order and elegance of everything about me, are just the soothing influence to do me good. They urge me to stay longer, but I shall adhere to my original determination of going to Miss Martineau's on the 20th, and I do not *mean* to stay with her longer than the 25th. We are going to-day to Craigcrook (Jeffrey's place), a beautiful spot, which old October has mellowed into his richest tints. Such a view of Edinburgh from it!

Letter to the Brays, 12th Oct. 1852.

Those who know the article on Whewell to be Mill's, generally think it good, but I confess to me it is unsatisfactory. The sun *does* shine here, albeit this is the 12th October. I wish you could see the view from Salisbury Crag.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 12th Oct. 1852.

Yes, he is an apostle. An apostle, it is true, with a back and front drawing-room, but still earnest, convinced, consistent, having fought a good fight, and now peacefully enjoying the re-

trospect of it. I shall leave these good friends with regret, almost with repentings, that I did not determine to pay them a longer visit. I have had a pleasant note from Miss Martineau this morning, with a vignette of her house, — I suppose to make me like all the better the idea of going there.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 19th Oct. 1852.

The coach brought me to Miss Martineau's gate at half-past six yesterday evening, and she was there with a beaming face, to welcome me. Mr. Atkinson joined us this morning, and is a very agreeable addition. There has been an intelligent gentleman visitor today, who is interested in Miss Martineau's building society; and we have been trudging about looking at cottages, and enjoying the sight of the mountains, in spite of the rain and mist. The weather is not promising, that is the worst of it. Miss M. is charming in her own home, — quite handsome from her animation and intelligence. She came behind me, put her hands round me, and kissed me in the prettiest way this evening, telling me she was so glad she had got me here. I send you her note that you may have an idea of "The Knoll."

Letter to the Brays, Thursday night, 22d Oct. 1852.

We had a fine day yesterday, and went to Borrowdale. I have not been well since I have been here. Still I manage to enjoy, certainly not myself, but my companions and the scenery. I shall set off from here on Tuesday morning, and shall be due at the Coventry station, I believe, at 5.50.

Letter to the Brays, 24th Oct. 1852.

*After a pleasant ten days' visit to Rosehill, Miss Evans returned to London on the 3d November.*

To get into a first-class carriage, fall asleep, and awake to find oneself where one would be, is al-

most as good as having Prince Hussein's carpet. This was my easy way of getting to London on Thursday. By 5 o'clock I had unpacked my boxes and made my room tidy, and then I began to feel some satisfaction in being settled down where I am of most use just now. After dinner came Herbert Spencer, and spent the evening. Yesterday morning Mr. Greg called on his way to Paris, to express his regret that he did not see me at Ambleside. He is very pleasing, but somehow or other he frightens me dreadfully. I am going to plunge into Thackeray's novel now ("Esmond").

Letter to the Brays, 6th Nov. 1852.

Oh this hideous fog! Let me grumble, for I have had headache the last three days, and there seems little prospect of anything else in such an atmosphere. I am ready to vow that I will not live in the Strand again after Christmas. If I were not choked by the fog, the time would trot pleasantly withal; but of what use are brains and friends when one lives in a light such as might be got in the chimney? "Esmond" is the most uncomfortable book you can imagine. You remember how you disliked "François le Champi." Well, the story of "Esmond" is just the same. The hero is in love with the daughter all through the book, and marries the mother at the end. You should read the debates on the opening of Parliament in the "Times." Lord Brougham, the greatest of English orators, perpetrates the most delicious *non sequitur* I have seen for a long time. "My lords, I believe that any disturbance of the repose of the world is very remote, *because it is our undeniable right and an unquestionable duty* to be prepared with the means of defence, should such an event occur." These be thy gods, O Israel!

Letter to the Brays, Saturday, Nov. (?) 1852.

I perceive your reading of the golden rule is "Do as you are done by;" and I shall be wiser than to expect a letter from you another Monday morning, when I have not earned it by my Saturday's billet. The fact is, both callers and work thicken, — the former sadly interfering with the latter. I will just tell you how it was last Saturday, and that will give you an idea of my days. My task was to read an article of Greg's in the "North British" on Taxation, a heap of newspaper articles, and all that J. S. Mill says on the same subject. When I had got some way into this *magnum mare*, in comes Mr. Chapman, with a thick German volume. "Will you read enough of this to give me your opinion of it?" Then of course I must have a walk after lunch, and when I had sat down again, thinking that I had two clear hours before dinner, rap at the door, — Mr. Lewes, who, of course, sits talking till the second bell rings. After dinner another visitor, and so behold me, at 11 P. M., still very far at sea on the subject of Taxation, but too tired to keep my eyes open. We had Bryant the poet last evening, — a pleasant, quiet, elderly man. Do you know of this second sample of plagiarism by Disraeli, detected by the "Morning Chronicle"?[1] It is worth sending for its cool impudence. Write me some news about trade, at all events. I could tolerate even Louis Napoleon, if somehow or other he could have a favourable influence on the Coventry trade!

Letter to the Brays, Monday, 20th Nov. 1852.

Another week almost "with the years beyond the flood"! What has it brought you? To me it has brought articles to read, — for the most part satisfactory,

Letter to the Brays, 4th Dec. 1852.

[1] Funeral oration on the Duke of Wellington.

— new callers, and letters to nibble at my time, and a meeting of the Association for the Abolition of Taxes on Knowledge. I am invited to go to the Leigh Smiths' on Monday evening to meet Mr. Robert Noel. Herbert Spencer is invited too, because Mr. Noel wants especially to see him. Barbara Smith speaks of Mr. R. Noel as their "dear German friend." So the Budget is come out, and I am to pay income-tax. All very right, of course. An enlightened personage like me has no "ignorant impatience of taxation." I am glad to hear of the Lectures to Young Men and the banquet of the Labourers' Friend Society. "Be not weary in well-doing." Thanks to Sara for her letter. She must not mind paying the income-tax: it is a right principle that Dizzy is going upon; and with her great conscientiousness she ought to enjoy being flayed on a right principle.

I am not well, — all out of sorts, — and what do you think I am minded to do? Take a return ticket, and set off by the train to-morrow 12 o'clock, have a talk with you and a blow over the hill, and come back relieved on Monday. I the rather indulge myself in this, because I think I shall not be able to be with you until some time after Christmas. Pray forgive me for not sending you word before. I have only just made up my mind.

Letter to the Brays, 10th Dec. 1852.

*This visit to Rosehill lasted only from the 11th to 13th December, and the following short note is the next communication: —*

I am very wretched to-day on many accounts, and am only able to write you two or three lines. I have heard this morning that Mr. Clarke is dangerously ill. Poor

Letter to Chas. Bray, 19th (?) Dec. 1852.

Chrissey and her children! Thank you for your kind letter.

Letter to Chas. Bray, 21st Dec. 1852.

I daresay you will have heard, before you receive this, that Edward Clarke is dead. I am to go to the funeral, which will take place on Friday. I am debating with myself as to what I ought to do now for poor Chrissey, but I must wait until I have been on the spot and seen my brother. If you hear no more from me, I shall trust to your goodness to give me a bed on Thursday night.

Letter to the Brays, Christmas Day, 25th Dec. 1852, from Meriden.

Your love and goodness are a comforting presence to me everywhere, whether I am ninety or only nine miles away from you. Chrissey bears her trouble much better than I expected. We hope that an advantageous arrangement may be made about the practice; and there is a considerable sum in debts to be collected. I shall return to town on Wednesday. It would have been a comfort to see you again before going back, but there are many reasons for not doing so. I am satisfied now that my duties do not lie *here*, though the dear creatures here will be a constant motive for work and economy.

Letter to the Brays, 31st Dec. 1852.

I arrived here only yesterday. I had agreed with Chrissey that, all things considered, it was wiser for me to return to town, — that I could do her no substantial good by staying another week, while I should be losing time as to other matters.

Letter to the Brays, 7th Jan. 1853.

I am out of spirits about the "Review." I should be glad to run away from it altogether. But one thing is clear, that it would be a great deal worse if I were not here. This is the only thought that consoles

me. We are thinking of sending Chrissey's eldest boy to Australia. A patient of his father's has offered to place him under suitable protection at Adelaide, and I strongly recommend Chrissey to accept her offer, — that is, if she will let it be available a year hence; so I have bought Sidney's book on Australia, and am going to send it to Chrissey to enlighten her about matters there, and accustom her mind to the subject. You are "jolly," I daresay, as good people have a right to be. Tell me as much of your happiness as you can, that I may rejoice in your joy, having none of my own.

Letter to the Brays, Jan. 1853.

I begin to feel for other people's wants and sorrows a little more than I used to do. Heaven help us! said the old religion; the new one, from its very lack of that faith, will teach us all the more to help one another. Tell Sara she is as good as a group of spice islands to me; she wafts the pleasantest influences, even from a distance.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 10th Jan. 1853.

Pray do not lay the sins of the article on the Atomic theory to poor Lewes's charge. How you could take it for his I cannot conceive. It is as remote from his style, both of thinking and writing, as anything can be.

Letter to the Brays, 18th Jan. 1853.

This week has yielded nothing to me but a crop of very large headaches. The pain has gone from my head at last; but I am feeling very much shattered, and find it easier to cry than to do anything else.

Letter to Mrs. Peter Taylor, 1st Feb. 1853.

My complaint, of which I am now happily rid, was rheumatism in the right arm, — a sufficient reason, you will see, for my employing a scribe to write that promise which I now fulfil. I am going into the country, perhaps for a fortnight, so that if you are kind

enough to come here on Wednesday evening, I shall not have the pleasure of seeing you. All the more reason for writing to you, in spite of cold feet and the vilest pens in the world.

Francis Newman is likely to come once or twice in the season, — not more. He has, of course, a multitude of engagements, and many more attractive ones than a *soirée* in the Strand.

Never mention me to him in the character of Editress. I think — at least I am told — that he has no high estimate of woman's powers and functions. But let that pass. He is a very pure, noble being, and it is good only to look at such.

The article on Slavery, in the last number of the "Westminster," — which I think the best article of them all, — is by W. E. Forster, a Yorkshire manufacturer, who married Dr. Arnold's daughter. He is a very earnest, independent thinker, and worth a gross of literary hacks who have the "trick" of writing.

I hope you are interested in the Slavery question, and in America generally, — that cradle of the future. I used resolutely to turn away from American politics, and declare that the United States was the last region of the world I should care to visit. Even now I almost loathe the *common* American type of character. But I am converted to a profound interest in the history, the laws, the social and religious phases of North America, and long for some knowledge of them.

Is it not cheering to think of the youthfulness of this little planet, and the immensely greater youthfulness of our race upon it? — to think that the higher moral tendencies of human nature are yet only in their germ? I feel this more thoroughly when I think of that great Western Con-

tinent, with its infant cities, its huge uncleared forests, and its unamalgamated races.

I daresay you have guessed that the article on Ireland is Harriet Martineau's. Herbert Spencer did *not* contribute to the last number.

*Apropos* of articles, do you see the "Prospective Review"? There is an admirable critique of Kingsley's "Phaethon" in it, by James Martineau. But perhaps you may not be as much in love with Kingsley's genius, and as much "riled" by his faults, as I am.

Of course you have read "Ruth" by this time. Its style was a great refreshment to me, from its finish and fulness. How women have the courage to write and publishers the spirit to buy at a high price the false and feeble representations of life and character that most feminine novels give, is a constant marvel to me. "Ruth," with all its merits, will not be an enduring or classical fiction, — will it? Mrs. Gaskell seems to me to be constantly misled by a love of sharp contrasts, — of "dramatic" effects. She is not contented with the subdued colouring, — the half tints of real life. Hence she agitates one for the moment, but she does not secure one's lasting sympathy; her scenes and characters do not become typical. But how pretty and graphic are the touches of description! That little attic in the minister's house, for example, which, with its pure white dimity bed-curtains, its bright-green walls, and the rich brown of its stained floor, remind one of a snowdrop springing out of the soil. Then the rich humour of Sally, and the sly satire in the description of Mr. Bradshaw. Mrs. Gaskell has certainly a charming mind, and one cannot help loving her as one reads her books.

A notable book just come out is Wharton's "Summary of the Laws relating to Women." "Enfranchisement of women" only makes creeping progress; and that is best, for woman does not yet deserve a much better lot than man gives her.

I am writing to you the last thing, and am so tired that I am not quite sure whether I finish my sentences. But your divining power will supply their deficiencies.

*The first half of February was spent in visits to the Brays and to Mrs. Clarke at Attleboro, and on returning to London Miss Evans writes:—*

Letter to Mrs. Bray, 15th Feb. 1853.

I am only just returned to a sense of the real world about me, for I have been reading "Villette," a still more wonderful book than "Jane Eyre." There is something almost preternatural in its power.

Letter to the Brays, 19th Feb. 1853.

Mrs. Follen showed me a delightful letter which she has had from Mrs. Stowe, telling all about herself. She begins by saying: "I am a little bit of a woman, rather more than forty, as withered and dry as a pinch of snuff; never very well worth looking at in my best days, and now a decidedly used-up article." The whole letter is most fascinating, and makes one love her.

"Villette," "Villette,"—have you read it?

Letter to the Brays, 25th Feb. 1853.

We had an agreeable evening on Wednesday,—a Mr. Huxley being the centre of interest. Since then I have been headachy and in a perpetual rage over an article that gives me no end of trouble, and will not be satisfactory after all. I should like to stick red-hot skewers through the writer, whose style is as sprawling as his handwriting! For the rest, I am

in excellent spirits, though not in the best health or temper. I am in for loads of work next quarter, but I shall not tell you what I am going to do.

I have been ready to tear my hair with disappointment about the next number of the "Review." In short, I am a miserable editor. I think I shall never have the energy to move, — it seems to be of so little consequence where I am or what I do.

Letter to the Brays, 19th March, 1853.

On Saturday I was correcting proofs literally from morning till night; yesterday ditto. The "Review" will be better than I once feared, but not so good as I once hoped. I suppose the weather has chilled your charity as well as mine. I am very hard and Mephistophelian just now, but I lay it all to this second winter. We had a pleasant evening last Wednesday. Lewes, as always, genial and amusing. He has quite won my liking, in spite of myself. Of course Mr. Bray highly approves the recommendation of the Commissioners on *Divorce*. I have been to Blandford Square (Leigh Smith's) to an evening party this week. Dined at Mr. Parkes's on Sunday, and am invited to go there again to-night to meet the Smiths. Lewes was describing Currer Bell to me yesterday as a little, plain, provincial, sickly-looking old maid. Yet what passion, what fire in her! Quite as much as in George Sand, only the clothing is less voluptuous.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 28th March, 1853.

What do you think of my going to Australia with Chrissey and all her family? — to settle them, and then come back. I am just going to write to her and suggest the idea. One wants *something* to keep up one's faith in happiness, — a ray or two for one's friends, if not for one's self.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 11th April, 1853.

We had an agreeable *soirée* last Wednesday. I fell in love with Helen Faucit. She is the most poetic woman I have seen for a long time, — there is the ineffable charm of a fine character which makes itself felt in her face, voice, and manner. I am taking doses of agreeable follies, as you recommend. Last night I went to the French theatre, and to-night I am going to the opera to hear "William Tell." People are very good to me. Mr. Lewes especially is kind and attentive, and has quite won my regard, after having had a good deal of my vituperation. Like a few other people in the world, he is much better than he seems. A man of heart and conscience wearing a mask of flippancy. When the warm days come, and the bearskin is under the acacia, you must have me again.

Letter to Mrs. Bray, 16th April, 1853.

*6th May. — Went to Rosehill and returned on 23d to Strand.*

On Wednesday I dined at Sir James Clark's, where the Combes are staying, and had a very pleasant evening. The Combes have taken lodgings in Oxford Terrace, where I mean to go. It is better than the Strand, — trees waving before the windows, and no noise of omnibuses. Last Saturday evening I had quite a new pleasure. We went to see Rachel again, and sat on the stage between the scenes. When the curtain fell, we walked about and saw the green-room, and all the dingy, dusty paraphernalia that make up theatrical splendour. I have not yet seen the "Vashti" of Currer Bell in Rachel, though there was some approach to it in Adrienne Lecouvreur.

Letter to Mrs. Bray, 17th June, 1853.

On Saturday we will go to Ockley, near Dorking, where are staying Miss Julia Smith, Barbara Smith, and Bessie Parkes. I shall write to the Ockley party to-day, and tell them of the probability that they will see you.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 28th June, 1853.

I never felt the delight of the thorough change that the coast gives one so much as now, and I shall be longing to be off with you again in October. I am on a delightful hill looking over the heads of the houses, and having a vast expanse of sea and sky for my only view. The bright weather and genial air — so different from what I have had for a year before — make me feel as happy and stupid as a well-conditioned cow. I sit looking at the sea and the sleepy ships with a purely animal *bien être*.

Letter to Mrs. Bray, 3d Aug. 1853, from St. Leonards.

It would have been a satisfaction to your benevolence to see me sitting on the beach laughing at the "Herald's" [1] many jokes, and sympathising with your indignation against Judge Maule. It always helps me to be happy when I know that you are so; but I do not choose to vindicate myself against doubts of that, because it is unworthy of you to entertain them. I am going on as well as possible physically, — really getting stout. I should like to have a good laugh with you immensely. How nice it would be to meet you and Cara on the beach this evening, and instead of sending you such a miserable interpreter of one's feelings as a letter, give you the look and the hand of warm affection! This British Channel really looks as blue as the Mediterranean to-day. What weather!

Letter to Mr. Bray, 9th Aug. 1853.

For the first time in my experience I am positively revelling in the "Prospective." James Mar-

[1] Mr. Bray had become proprietor of the "Coventry Herald."

tineau transcends himself in beauty of imagery in the article on Sir William Hamilton, but I have not finished him yet. Yesterday it rained *sans* intermission, and of course I said *cui bono?* and found my troubles almost more than I could bear; but to-day the sun shines, and there is blue above and blue below, consequently I find life very glorious, and myself a particularly fortunate *diavolessa.* The landlord of my lodgings is a German, — comes from Saxe-Weimar, knows well the Duchess of Orleans, and talked to me this morning of *Mr.* Schiller and *Mr.* Goethe. *Apropos* of Goethe, there is a most true, discriminating passage about him in the article on Shakspeare in the "Prospective." *Mr.* Goethe is one of my companions here, and I had felt some days before reading the passage the truth which it expresses.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 18th Aug. 1853.

*Subjoined is the passage from the "Prospective Review" of August, 1853: —*

*"Goethe's works are too much in the nature of literary studies; the mind is often deeply impressed by them, but one doubts if the author was. He saw them as he saw the houses of Weimar and the plants in the act of metamorphosis. He had a clear perception of their fixed condition and their successive transitions, but he did not really (at least so it seems to us) comprehend their motive power. In a word, he appreciated their life but not their liveliness. . . . And we trace this not to a defect in imaginative power, — a defect which it would be a simple absurdity to impute to Goethe, — but to the tone of his character and the habits of his mind. He moved hither and thither through life, but he was always a man apart. He mixed with unnumbered kinds of men, with courts and academies, students and women, camps and artists, — but everywhere he was with them, yet not of them. In every scene he was there, and he made it clear that he was there*

*with a reserve and as a stranger. He went there* to experience. *As a man of universal culture, and well skilled in the order and classification of human life, the fact of any one class or order being beyond his reach or comprehension seemed an absurdity; and it was an absurdity. He thought that he was equal to moving in any description of society, and he was equal to it; but then, on that account, he was absorbed in none.*"

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 19th Sept. 1853.

As for me, I am in the best health and spirits. I have had a letter from Mr. Combe to-day urging me to go to Edinburgh, but I have made an engagement with Mr. Chapman to do work, which will oblige me to remain in London. Mrs. P. is a very bonny, pleasant-looking woman, with a smart drawing-room and liberal opinions, — in short, such a friend as self-interest, well understood, would induce one to cultivate. I find it difficult to meet with any lodgings at once tolerable and cheap. My theory is to *live* entirely — that is, pay rent and find food — out of my positive income, and then work for as large a surplus as I can get. The next number of the "Review" will be better than usual. Froude writes on the Book of Job! He at first talked of an article on the three great *subjective* poems, — Job, Faust, and Hamlet, — an admirable subject, — but it has shrunk to the Book of Job alone.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 1st Oct. 1853.

I have been busied about my lodgings all afternoon. I am not going to Albion Street, but to 21 Cambridge Street, Hyde Park Square. I hope you will be pleased with our present number. If you don't think the "Universal Postulate" first-rate, I shall renounce you as a critic. Why don't you write grumbling letters to me when you are out of humour with life, instead of making me ashamed of myself for ever

having grumbled to you? I have been a more good-for-nothing correspondent than usual lately, — this affair of getting lodgings, added to my other matters, has taken up my time and thoughts. I have promised to do some work to-night and to-morrow for a person[1] who is rather more idle than myself, so I have not a moment to spare.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 22d Oct. 1853.

I am reading "The Religion of the Heart" (Leigh Hunt's), and am far more pleased with it than I expected to be. I have just fallen on two passages with which you will agree. "Parker . . . is full of the poetry of religion; Martineau equally so, with a closer style and incessant eloquence of expression, perhaps a perilous superabundance of it as regards the claims of matter over manner; and his assumptions of perfection in the character of Jesus are so reiterated and peremptory that in a man of less evident heart and goodness they might almost look like a very unction of insincerity or of policy, — of doubt forcing itself to seem undoubting. Hennell's 'Christian Theism' is one long beautiful discourse proclaiming the great Bible of Creation, and reconciling Pagan and Christian Philosophy."

Good Sir James Clark stopped me in the Park yesterday, as I was sauntering along with eyes on the clouds, and made very fatherly inquiries about me, urging me to spend a quiet evening with him and Lady Clark next week, — which I will certainly do; for they are two capital people, without any snobbery. I like my lodgings, — the housekeeper cooks charming little dinners for me, and I have not one disagreeable to complain of at present, save such as are inseparable from a ground floor.

[1] Correcting "Leader" proofs for Mr. Lewes.

Last night I saw the first fine specimen of a man in the shape of a clergyman that I ever met with, — Dawes, the Dean of Hereford. He is the man who has been making the experiment of mingling the middle and lower classes in schools. He has a face so intelligent and benignant that children might grow good by looking at it. Harriet Martineau called yesterday. She is going to her brother's at Birmingham soon.

Letter to Mr. Bray, 29th Oct. 1853.

Mr. Lewes was at Cambridge about a fortnight ago, and found that Herbert Spencer was a great deal talked of there for the article on the Universal Postulate, as well as other things. Mr. Lewes himself has a knot of devotees there who make his "History of Philosophy" a private text-book. Miss Martineau's "Comte" is out now. Do you mean to *do* it? or Mr. Lewes's? We can get no one to write an article on Comte for the next number of the "Westminster," — Bain, our last hope, refusing.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 3d Nov. 1853.

I think you would find some capital extracts for the "Herald" (Coventry), in the article on Church Parties in the "Edinburgh." The "Record" is attempting a reply to it, in which it talks of the truculent infidelity of *Voltaire* AND *Robespierre!* Has A. sent you his book on the Sabbath? If ever I write a book, I will make a present of it to nobody, — it is the surest way of taking off the edge of appetite for it, if no more. I am as well as possible, — and certainly when I put my head into the house in the Strand, I feel that I have gained, or rather escaped, a great deal physically by my change. Have you known the misery of writing with a

Letter to Mr. Bray, 5th Nov. 1853.

*tired* steel pen, which is reluctant to make a mark? If so, you will know why I leave off.

Letter to Mrs. Houghton, 7th Nov. 1853.

Chrissey has just sent me a letter, which tells that you have been suffering severely, and that you are yet very ill. I must satisfy my own feelings, by telling you that I grieve at this, though it will do you little good to know it. Still, when *I* am suffering, I do care for sympathy, and perhaps you are of the same mind. If so, think of me as your loving sister, who remembers all your kindness to her, all the pleasant hours she has had with you, and every little particular of her intercourse with you, however long and far she may have been removed from you. Dear Fanny, I can never be indifferent to your happiness or sorrow, and in this present sad affliction my thoughts and love are with you. I shall teaze you with no words about myself *now*, — perhaps by-and-by it will amuse you to have a longer letter.

Letter to Mr. Bray, 8th Nov. 1853.

Hitherto I have been spending £9 per month, — at least after that rate, — but I have had frequent guests. I am exceedingly comfortable, and feel quite at home now. Harriet Martineau has been very kind, — called again on Tuesday, and yesterday sent to invite me to go to Lady Compton's, where she is staying, on Saturday evening. This, too, in spite of my having vexed her by introducing Mr. Lewes to her, which I did as a desirable bit of peacemaking.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 22d Nov. 1853 (thirty-fourth birthday).

I begin this year more happily than I have done most years of my life. "Notre vraie destinée," says Comte, "se compose de *resignation* et *d'activité*," — and I seem more disposed to both than I have ever been

before. Let us hope that we shall both get stronger by the year's activity, — calmer by its resignation. I know it may be just the contrary, — don't suspect me of being a canting optimist. We *may* both find ourselves at the end of the year going faster to the hell of conscious moral and intellectual weakness. Still there is a possibility — even a probability — the other way. I have not seen Harriet Martineau's "Comte" yet, — she is going to give me a copy, — but Mr. Lewes tells me it seems to him admirably well done. I told Mr. Chapman yesterday that I wished to give up any connection with the editorship of the "Westminster." He wishes me to continue the present state of things until April. I shall be much more satisfied on many accounts to have done with that affair; but I shall find the question of supplies rather a difficult one this year, as I am not likely to get any money either for "Feuerbach" or for "The Idea of a Future Life,"[1] for which I am to have "half profits" $= \frac{0}{0}$!

I hope you will appreciate this *bon mot* as I do: "C'est un homme admirable, — il se tait en sept langues!"[2]

I am going to detail all my troubles to you. In the first place, the door of my sitting-room does n't quite fit, and a draught is the consequence. Secondly, there is a piano in the house which has decidedly entered on its second childhood, and this piano is occasionally played on by Miss P. with a really enviable *aplomb*. Thirdly, the knocks at the door startle

Letter to Mrs. Bray, 2d Dec. 1853.

[1] Advertised in 1853–54 as to appear by "Marian Evans" in Chapman's Quarterly Series, but never published.

[2] Lord Acton tells me he first heard this *bon mot*, in 1855, related of Immanuel Bekker, the philologist.

me, — an annoyance inseparable from a ground-floor room. Fourthly, Mrs. P. scolds the servants *stringendo e fortissimo* while I am dressing in the morning. Fifthly, — there is no fifthly. I really have not another discomfort when I am well, which, alas! I have not been for the last ten days; so, while I have been up to the chin in possibilities of enjoyment, I have been too sick and headachy to use them. One thing is needful, — a good digestion.

Letter to Mrs. Bray, 28th Dec. 1853.

Spent Christmas Day alone at Cambridge Street. How shall I thank you enough for sending me that splendid barrel of beet-root, so nicely packed? I shall certainly eat it and enjoy it, which, I fancy, is the end you sought, and not thanks. Don't suppose that I am looking miserable, — *au contraire*. My only complaints just now are idleness and dislike-to-getting-up-in-the-morningness, whereby the day is made too short for what I want to do. I resolve every day to conquer the flesh the next, and, of course, am a little later in consequence. I dined with Arthur Helps yesterday at Sir James Clark's, — very snug, — only he and myself. He is a sleek man, with close-snipped hair; has a quiet, humorous way of talking, like his books.

*At the beginning of January, 1854, there was another visit to Mrs. Clarke at Attleboro for ten days.*

Letter to Chas. Bray, 6th Feb. 1854.

In the last number of the "Scotsman" which I sent you, there was a report of a speech by Dr. Guthrie at the Education meeting, containing a passage which I meant to have copied. He is speaking of the impossibility of teaching morality with the "Bible shut," and says that in that case the teacher would be

obliged to resort to "congruity and the fitness of things," about which the boy knows nothing more than that the apple is *fit* for his mouth. What is wanted to convince the boy of his sin is, "Thou God seest me," and "Thou bleeding Lamb, the best morality is love of Thee"!! Mr. Lewes came a few minutes after you left, and desired me to tell you that he was sorry to miss you.

Thank you for your very kind letter, which I received this morning. It is pleasant to think of you as quite well, and enjoying your sea breezes.

Letter to Mrs. Houghton, 6th April, 1854.

But do you imagine me sitting with my hands crossed, ready to start for any quarter of the world at the shortest notice? It is not on those terms that people, not rich, live in London. I shall be deep in proof-sheets till the end of May, and shall only dismiss them to make material for new ones. I daresay you will pity me. But as one of Balzac's characters says, after maturity, "La vie n'est que l'exercice d'une habitude dans un milieu préféré;" and I could no more live out of my *milieu* than the haddocks I daresay you are often having for dinner.

My health is better. I had got into a labyrinth of headaches and palpitations, but I think I am out of it now, and I hope to keep well. I am not the less obliged to you, dear Fanny, for wishing to have me with you. But to leave London now would not be agreeable to me, even if it were morally possible. To see you again would certainly be a pleasure, but I hope that will come to pass without my crossing the Irish Channel.

I am rather overdone with the week's work, and the prospect of what is to come next. Poor Lewes is ill, and is ordered not to put pen to paper for

a month; so I have something to do for him in addition to my own work, which is rather pressing. He is gone to Arthur Helps, in Hampshire, for ten days, and I really hope this total cessation from work, in obedience to a peremptory order, will end in making him better than he has been for the last year. No opera and no fun for me for the next month! Happily I shall have no time to regret it. Plenty of bright sun on your anemone bed. How lovely your place must look with its fresh leaves!

Letter to Mrs. Bray, Saturday, 18th April, 1854.

It is quite possible that I may wish to go to the Continent, or twenty other things. Mr. Lewes is going on a walking excursion to Windsor to-day with his doctor, who pronounces him better, but not yet fit for work. However, he is obliged to do a little, and must content himself with an *approximation* to his doctor's directions. In this world all things are approximations, and in the system of the Dog Star too, in spite of Dr. Whewell.

Letter to Chas. Bray, 23d May, 1854.

My troubles are purely psychical, — self-dissatisfaction, and despair of achieving anything worth the doing. I can truly say they vanish into nothing before any fear for the happiness of those I love. Thank you for letting me know how things are, for indeed I could not bear to be shut out from your anxieties. When I spoke of myself as an island, I did not mean that I was so exceptionally. We are all islands, —

Letter to Mrs. Bray, Friday, no date, 1854.

> "Each in his hidden sphere of joy or woe,
> Our hermit spirits dwell and roam apart," —

and this seclusion is sometimes the most intensely felt at the very moment your friend is caressing

you or consoling you. But this gradually becomes a source of satisfaction instead of repining. When we are young, we think our troubles a mighty business, — that the world is spread out expressly as a stage for the particular drama of our lives, and that we have a right to rant and foam at the mouth if we are crossed. I have done enough of that in my time. But we begin at last to understand that these things are important only to our own consciousness, which is but as a globule of dew on a rose-leaf, that at mid-day there will be no trace of. This is no high-flown sentimentality, but a simple reflection, which I find useful to me every day. I expect to see Mr. Lewes back again to-day. His poor head — his only fortune — is not well yet; and he has had the misery of being *ennuyé* with idleness, without perceiving the compensating physical improvement. Still, I hope the good he has been getting has been greater than he has been conscious of. I expect "Feuerbach" will be all in print by the end of next week, and there are no skippings, except such as have been made on very urgent grounds.

Thanks for your assurance of welcome. I will trust to it when the gods send favourable circumstances. But I see no probability of my being able to be with you before your other midsummer visitors arrive. I delight to think that you are all a little more cheery.

Letter to Mrs. Bray, Tuesday, 6th June, 1854.

I reached the Euston Station as dusty as an old ledger, but with no other "incommodity." I went to the Lyceum last night to see "Sunshine through the Clouds," [1]

Letter to Mrs. Bray, Wednesday, 28th June, 1854.

[1] Translated and adapted from the French, "La joie fait peur," by Mr. Lewes, under the name of Slingsby Lawrence.

a wonderfully original and beautiful piece by Mme. de Girardin, which makes one cry rather too much for pleasure. Vestris acts finely the bereaved mother, passing through all the gradations of doubt and hope to the actual recovery of her lost son. My idea of you is rather bright just now, and really helps to make me enjoy all that is enjoyable. That is part of the benefit I have had from my pleasant visit, which was made up of sunshine, green fields, pleasant looks, and good eatables, — an excellent compound. Will you be so kind as to send my books by railway, *without* the Shelley?

Pray consider the Strauss MSS. waste paper. *I* shall never want them again. I dined with your old acquaintance, Dr. Conolly, at Sir James Clark's, the other day. He took me down to dinner, and we talked of you.

Letter to Mrs. Bray, Monday, 4th July, 1854.

*The translation of Ludwig Feuerbach's "Wesen des Christenthums" was published in July in Chapman's Quarterly Series, with Miss Evans's name on the title-page as the translator; the first and only time her real name appeared in print.*

I am going to pack up the Hebrew Grammar, the Apocryphal Gospels, and your pretty Titian, to be sent to you. Shall I despatch them by rail or deposit them with Mr. Chapman to be asked for by Mr. Bray when he comes to town? I shall soon send you a good-bye, for I am preparing to go abroad (?). Herbert Spencer's article on the Genesis of Science is a good one. He will stand in the Biographical Dictionaries of 1954 as "Spencer, Herbert, an

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 10th July, 1854.

original and profound philosophical writer, especially known by his great work, . . . which gave a new impulse to psychology, and has mainly contributed to the present advanced position of that science, compared with that which it had attained in the middle of the last century. The life of this philosopher, like that of the great Kant, offers little material for the narrator. Born in the year 1820," &c.

Dear friends, — all three, — I have only time to say good-bye, and God bless you. *Poste Restante,* Weimar, for the next six weeks, and afterwards Berlin. Ever your loving and grateful Marian.

Letter to the Brays, 20th July, 1854.

*We have now been led up to the most important event in George Eliot's life, — her union with Mr. George Henry Lewes. Here, as elsewhere, it seems to me to be of the first importance that she should speak for herself; and there is, fortunately, a letter to Mrs. Bray, dated in September, 1855, — fourteen months after the event, — which puts on record the point of view from which she regarded her own action. I give this letter here (out of its place as to date); and I may add — what, I think, has not been mentioned before — that not only was Mr. Lewes's previous family life irretrievably spoiled, but his home had been wholly broken up for nearly two years. In forming a judgment on so momentous a question, it is above all things necessary to understand what was actually undertaken, — what was actually achieved, — and, in my opinion, this can best be arrived at, not from any outside statement or arguments, but by consideration of the whole tenor of the life which follows, in the development of which Mr. Lewes's true character, as well as George Eliot's, will unfold itself. No words that any one else can write, no arguments any one else can use, will, I think, be so impressive as the life itself.*

Letter to Mrs. Bray, 4th Sept. 1855.

If there is any one action or relation of my life which is and always has been profoundly serious, it is my relation to Mr. Lewes. It is, however, natural enough that you should mistake me in many ways, for not only are you unacquainted with Mr. Lewes's real character and the course of his actions, but also it is several years now since you and I were much together, and it is possible that the modifications my mind has undergone may be quite in the opposite direction of what you imagine. No one can be better aware than yourself that it is possible for two people to hold different opinions on momentous subjects with equal sincerity, and an equally earnest conviction that their respective opinions are alone the truly moral ones. If we differ on the subject of the marriage laws, I at least can believe of you that you cleave to what you believe to be good; and I don't know of anything in the nature of your views that should prevent you from believing the same of me. *How far* we differ, I think we neither of us know, for I am ignorant of your precise views; and apparently you attribute to me both feelings and opinions which are not mine. We cannot set each other quite right in this matter in letters, but one thing I can tell you in few words. Light and easily broken ties are what I neither desire theoretically nor could live for practically. Women who are satisfied with such ties do *not* act as I have done. That any unworldly, unsuperstitious person who is sufficiently acquainted with the realities of life can pronounce my relation to Mr. Lewes immoral, I can only understand by remembering how subtle and complex are the influences that mould opinion. But I *do* remember this: and I indulge in no arro-

gant or uncharitable thoughts about those who condemn us, even though we might have expected a somewhat different verdict. From the majority of persons, of course, we never looked for anything but condemnation. We are leading no life of self-indulgence, except indeed that, being happy in each other, we find everything easy. We are working hard to provide for others better than we provide for ourselves, and to fulfil every responsibility that lies upon us. Levity and pride would not be a sufficient basis for that. Pardon me if, in vindicating myself from some unjust conclusions, I seem too cold and self-asserting. I should not care to vindicate myself if I did not love you and desire to relieve you of the pain which you say these conclusions have given you. Whatever I may have misinterpreted before, I do not misinterpret your letter this morning, but read in it nothing else than love and kindness towards me, to which my heart fully answers yes. I should like never to write about myself again; it is not healthy to dwell on one's own feelings and conduct, but only to try and live more faithfully and lovingly every fresh day. I think not one of the endless words and deeds of kindness and forbearance you have ever shown me has vanished from my memory. I recall them often, and feel, as about everything else in the past, how deficient I have been in almost every relation of my life. But that deficiency is irrevocable, and I can find no strength or comfort except in "pressing forward towards the things that are before," and trying to make the present better than the past. But if we should never be very near each other again, dear Cara, do bear this faith in your mind, that I was not insensible or ungrateful to all your goodness, and

that I am one amongst the many for whom you have not lived in vain. I am very busy just now, and have been obliged to write hastily. Bear this in mind, and believe that no meaning is mine which contradicts my assurance that I am your affectionate and earnest friend.

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER V

MARCH, 1850, TO JULY, 1854

Return to England with M. D'Albert — Depressing effect of change — Visit to Rosehill — Visit to brother and sister at Griff and Meriden — Deeper depression — To Rosehill again with M. D'Albert — Makes her home there for sixteen months — Reviews Mackay's "Progress of the Intellect" in "Westminster" — Meets Mr. Chapman, the editor of the "Westminster" — Helps to settle Prospectus of new series of the "Review" — Visits Robert Noel at Bishop Steignton with Mrs. Bray — Visit to London — Crystal Palace — Returns to Rosehill, and meets Mr. and Mrs. George Combe — Goes to London as assistant editor of the "Westminster Review" — Letters to Brays — Review writing: Dr. Brabant, Foxton, Wilson — Meets Mr. Herbert Spencer — Miss Martineau — Distractions of London — Low health — Miss Bremer — Introduction to Mr. Lewes — Opinion of House of Lords — Carlyle's "Life of Sterling" — Carlyle anecdotes — Mackay — James Martineau — J. H. Newman's Lectures — Translation of Schleiermacher — Letter from Carlyle — Intimacy begins with Mr. Lewes — Reviews Carlyle's "Sterling" in "Westminster" — Visit to Rosehill — Returns to Strand — Harriet Martineau — Pierre Leroux — Louis Blanc — Miss Bessie Parkes — Mrs. Peter Taylor — "Margaret Fuller's Life" — Description of "Westminster" reviewers — Growing intimacy with Mr. Herbert Spencer — Meeting of authors and booksellers at Mr. Chapman's — Admiration of Prince Albert — Grisi — Hack work of "Review" — Appreciation of Miss Martineau's writings — Singing of Charity children at St. Paul's — George Combe's opinion of "Westminster" editing — Barbara Leigh Smith — Visit to Broadstairs — Florence Nightingale — Return to Strand — Depression — Professor Owen on the Cerebellum — Visit to Combes at Edinburgh, and to Harriet Martineau at Ambleside — Return to London — Reading "Esmond" — Lord Brougham's speech — Work in Strand — Bryant — Visit to Rosehill — Death of Edward Clarke — Visit to widowed sister at Meriden — Return to Strand — Letter to Mrs. Peter Taylor — Views on America — "Ruth" — Visit to Rosehill and to Mrs. Clarke at Attleboro — Return to Strand — Reading "Villette" — Letter from Mrs. Stowe to Mrs. Follen — Meets Huxley — Thinks of going to Australia to settle Mrs. Clarke — Admiration of Helen Faucit — Growing regard for Mr. Lewes — Kindness of Sir James Clark — Visit to Ockley — Change to St. Leonards — Improvement in health — Return to Strand — Spencer's "Universal Postulate" — Removal to 21 Cambridge Street — Leigh Hunt's "Religion of the Heart" — Dawes, Dean of Hereford — Harriet Martineau — Comte — Contemplates publishing "The Idea of a Future Life" — Meets Arthur Helps — Intimate relations with Mr. Lewes — Translation of Feuerbach — Visit to Rosehill — Return to London — Feuerbach completed — Estimate of Herbert Spencer — Good-bye to Brays — Union with Mr. Lewes — Letter to Mrs. Bray thereon.

## CHAPTER VI

I SAID a last farewell to Cambridge Street on 20th July, 1854, and found myself on board the Ravensbourne, bound for Antwerp. The day was glorious, and our passage perfect. The sunset was lovely, but still lovelier the dawn as we were passing up the Scheldt between two and three in the morning. The crescent moon, the stars, the first faint blush of the dawn reflected in the glassy river, the dark mass of clouds on the horizon, which sent forth flashes of lightning, and the graceful forms of the boats and sailing-vessels, painted in jet-black on the reddish gold of the sky and water, made up an unforgettable picture. Then the sun rose and lighted up the sleepy shores of Belgium, with their fringe of long grass, their rows of poplars, their church-spires and farm-buildings.

Journal, 20th July, 1854.

The great treat at Antwerp was the sight of the Descent from the Cross, which, with its pendant, the Elevation of the Cross, has been undergoing restoration. In the latter, the face of Jesus is sublime in its expression of agony and trust in the Divine. It is certainly the finest conception of the suffering Christ I have ever seen. The rest of the picture gave me no pleasure. But in the Descent from the Cross, colour, form, and expression alike impressed me with the sense of grandeur and beauty. A little miserable copy of the picture placed near it served as an admirable foil.

21st July.

We went to the museum and saw Rubens's Crucifixion, even more beautiful to me than the Descent from the Cross. These two pictures profoundly impressed me with the miserable lack of breadth and grandeur in the conceptions of our living artists. The reverence for the old masters is not all humbug and superstition. Journal, 22d July.

We breakfasted in the public room at the hotel at Cologne, and were joined there by Dr. Brabant and Strauss. After a short interview with them, we went on board the steamboat which was to take us to Coblentz. 30th July.

It was very pretty to look out of the window, when dressing, on a garden that reminded one of an English village: the town is more like a huge village, or market-town, than the precincts of a court. Weimar, Description, Aug.-Oct. 1854.

G. called on Schöll, and in the afternoon he (Schöll) came and took us to the *Schloss*, where we saw the Dichter Zimmer, — a suite of rooms dedicated to Goethe, Schiller, and Wieland. In each room there is the bust of the poet who is its presiding genius; and the walls of the Goethe and Schiller rooms are decorated with frescos, representing scenes from their works. The Wieland room is decorated with arabesques only. The idea of these rooms is a very pretty one, but the frescos are badly executed. I am delighted with Schöll. He is a bright-looking, well-made German, with his head finely set on his shoulders, very little like a German. We discovered, after we had known him some time, that he is an Austrian, and so has more southern blood in his veins than the heavy Thuringians. His manners are hearty and cordial, and his conversation really instructive: his ideas are so thoroughly shaped and so admirably ex-

pressed. Sauppe is also a *Gelehrter*, Director of the Gymnasium, and editor of a series of Classics which are being brought out; and he is evidently thought a great deal of in Weimar. We went with the Schölls and Sauppes to Tiefurt, and saw the queer little *Schloss* which used to be Amalia's residence. Tiefurt was a favourite resort of ours, for the walk to it is a very pleasant one, and the Tiefurt park is a little paradise. The Ilm is seen here to the best advantage: it is clearer than at Weimar, and winds about gracefully among fine trees. One of the banks is a high steep declivity, which shows the trees in all their perfection. In autumn, when the yellow and scarlet were at their brightest, these banks were fairy-like in their beauty. It was here that Goethe and his Court friends got up the performance of "Die Fischerin" by torchlight.

About ten days after our arrival at Weimar, we made an excursion to Ettersburg, one of the Duke's summer residences, interesting to us beforehand as the scene of private theatricals and *sprees* in the Goethe days. We carried provisions with us and Keats's poems. The morning was one of the brightest and hottest that August ever bestowed, and it required some resolution to trudge along the shadeless *chaussée*, which formed the first two or three miles of our way. One compensating pleasure was the sight of the beautiful mountain ashes in full berry which, alternately with cherry-trees, border the road for a considerable distance. I felt a child's love for the bunches of coral standing out against the blue sky. The *Schloss* is a house of very moderate size, and no pretension of any kind. Two flights of steps lead up to the door, and the balustrades are ornamented with

beautiful creepers. A tiny sort of piazza under the steps is ornamented with creepers too, and has pretty earthenware vases filled with plants hanging from the ceiling. We felt how much beauty might be procured at small expense in looking at these things. A beautiful walk through a beechwood took us to the *Mooshütte*, before which stands the beech whereon Goethe and his friends cut their names, and from which Goethe denounced Waldemar. We could recognise some of the initials. With Ettersburg I shall always associate Arthur Helps, for he was with us on the second and last time we saw it. He came to Weimar quite unexpectedly on the 29th August, and the next evening we all three drove to Ettersburg. He said the country just round Weimar reminded him of Spain. This led him to talk of his Spanish travels, and he told us some delightful stories in a delightful way. At one inn he was considerably embarrassed in eating his dinner by the presence of a handsome woman, who sat directly opposite to him, resting on her elbows, and fixing her dark eyes on him with a fearful intensity of interest. This woman was the cook, anxious to know that her dishes were acceptable to the stranger. Under this terrible surveillance, he did not dare to omit a single dish, though sorely longing to do so.

Our greatest expedition from Weimar was to Ilmenau. We set out with a determination to find the Gabel-Bach and Kickel-hahn (Goethe's residence) without the incumbrance of a guide. We found the man who inhabits the simple wooden house, which used to be Carl August's hunting-box. He sent a man on with us to show us the way to the Kickel-hahn, which we at last reached, — I with weary legs. There is a magnificent view of

hills from this spot; but Goethe's tiny wooden house is now closely shut in by fir-trees, and nothing can be seen from the windows. His room, which forms the upper floor of the house, is about ten or twelve feet square. It is now quite empty, but there is an interesting memorial of his presence in these wonderful lines, written by his own hand, near the window-frame, —

"Ueber allen Gipfeln
Ist Ruh,
In allen Wipfeln
Spürest du
Kaum einen Hauch;
Die Vögelein schweigen im Walde.
Warte nur, balde
Ruhest du auch."

We wrote our names near one of the windows.

About the middle of September the theatre opened, and we went to hear "Ernani." Liszt looked splendid as he conducted the opera. The grand outline of his face and floating hair were seen to advantage as they were thrown into dark relief by the stage lamps. We were so fortunate as to have all three of Wagner's most celebrated operas while we were at Weimar. G., however, had not patience to sit out more than two acts of "Lohengrin;" and, indeed, I too was weary. The declamation appeared to me monotonous, and situations, in themselves trivial or disagreeable, were dwelt on fatiguingly. Without feeling competent to pass a judgment on this opera as music, one may venture to say that it fails in one grand requisite of art, based on an unchangeable element in human nature, — the need for contrast. With the "Fliegender Holländer" I was delighted; the poem and the music were alike charming. The "Tannhäuser," too, created in me a great desire

to hear it again. Many of the situations, and much of the music, struck me as remarkably fine. And I appreciated these operas all the better retrospectively when we saw "Der Freischütz," which I had never before heard and seen on the stage. The effect of the delicious music, with which one is so familiar, was completely spoiled by the absence of recitative and the terrible *lapsus* from melody to ordinary speech. The bacchanalian song seemed simply ridiculous, sung at a little pot-house table at a party of *two*, one of whom was sunk in melancholy; and the absurdity reached a *ne plus ultra*, when Caspar climbed the tree, apparently with the sole purpose of being shot. *Apropos* of the theatre, we were immensely amused to learn that a fair, small-featured man, who somehow always looked to me as if he had just come out of the shell, had come to Weimar to fit himself for a dramatic writer by going behind the scenes! He had as yet written nothing, but was going to work in what he considered a *gründlich* way.

When we passed along the Schiller Strasse, I used to be very much thrilled by the inscription, "Hier wohnte Schiller," over the door of his small house. Very interesting it is to see his study, which is happily left in its original state. In his bedroom we saw his skull for the first time, and were amazed at the smallness of the intellectual region. There is an intensely interesting sketch of Schiller lying dead, which I saw for the first time in the study; but all pleasure in thinking of Schiller's portraits and bust is now destroyed to me by the conviction of their untruthfulness. Rauch told us that he had a *miserable Stirne*.[1] Waagen says that Tieck the sculptor told him

[1] A wretched forehead.

there was something in Schiller's whole person which reminded him of a *camel.*

Goethe's house is much more important-looking, but, to English eyes, far from being the palatial residence which some German writers think it. The entrance-hall is certainly rather imposing, with its statues in niches and broad staircase. The latter was made after his own design, and was an "aftershine" of Italian tastes. The pictures are wretched, the casts not much better, — indeed, I remember nothing which seemed intrinsically worth looking at. The MS. of his "Römische Elegien" written by himself, in the Italian character, is to be seen here; and one likes to look at it better than at most of the other things. G. had obtained permission from Frau v. Goethe to see the studio and Schlafzimmer, which are not open to the public, and here our feelings were deeply moved. We entered first a small room containing drawers and shelves devoted to his mineralogical collections. From these we passed into the study. It is rather a dark room, for there are only two small windows, — German windows. A plain deal table stands in the middle, and near the chair, against this table, is a high basket where, I was afterwards told, Goethe used to put his pocket-handkerchief. A long sort of writing-table and bookcase united stands against one wall. Here hangs the pincushion, just as he left it, with visiting-cards suspended on threads, and other trifles which greatness and death have made sacred. Against the opposite wall, where you enter the bedroom, there is a high writing-desk, on which stands a little statue of Napoleon in creamy glass. The bedroom is very small. By the side of the bed stands a stuffed arm-chair, where he used to sit and read

while he drank his coffee in the morning. It was not until very late in his life that he adopted the luxury of an arm-chair. From the other side of the study one enters the library, which is fitted up in a very makeshift fashion, with rough deal shelves, and bits of paper, with Philosophy, History, &c., written on them to mark the classification of the books. Among such memorials one breathes deeply, and the tears rush to one's eyes. There is one likeness of Goethe that is really startling and thrilling from the idea it gives one of perfect resemblance. It is painted on a cup, and is a tiny miniature, but the execution is so perfect that, on applying a magnifying-glass, every minute stroke has as natural an appearance as the texture of a flower or the parts of an insect under the microscope.

Equally interesting is the *Gartenhaus*, which we used to see almost every day in our walks. Within, it is a not uncomfortable homely sort of cottage; no furniture is left in it, and the family want to sell it. It stands on a pleasant slope fronting the west, and there is a charming bit of garden and orchard attached to it. Close to the garden hedge runs the road which leads to Ober Weimar, and on the other side of this road a meadow stretches to the trees which border the Ilm. A bridge nearly opposite the Gartenhaus takes one to the Borkenhaus, Carl August's little retreat, from which he used to telegraph to Goethe. The road to Ober Weimar was one of our favourite walks, especially towards the end of our stay at Weimar, when we were glad of all the sunshine we could get. Sometimes we used to turn out of it, up a grove of weeping birches, into the ploughed fields at the top of the slope on which

the Gartenhaus and other little villas stand. Here we enjoyed many a lovely sunset: one in particular was marvellously splendid. The whole hemisphere was golden, towards the east tinted with rose colour. From this little height we looked on the plantations of the park in their autumnal colouring, the town, with its steep-roofed church and its castle tower, coloured a gay green, the line of chestnuts along the Belvedere Chaussée, and Belvedere itself peeping from its nest of trees.

Another very favourite walk of mine was the *Webicht*, a beautiful wood through which ran excellent carriage-roads and grassy footpaths. How richly have I enjoyed skirting this wood, and seeing, on the other side, the sky arching grandly down over the open fields, the evening red flushing the west over the town, and the bright stars come out as if to relieve the sun in his watch over mortals! And then the winding road through the Webicht on the side towards Tiefurt, with its tall overarching trees now bending their mossy trunks forward, now standing with stately erectness like lofty pillars; and the charming grassy paths through the heart of the wood among its silvery-barked birches! The Webicht lies towards Tiefurt, and one side of it is bordered by the road thither. I remember, as we were returning from Tiefurt one evening, a beautiful effect of the setting sunlight pouring itself under the trees and making the road before us almost crimson.

One of our pleasantest acquaintances at Weimar was the French Ambassador, the Marquis de Ferrière, a very favourable specimen of a Frenchman, but intensely French. His genial soul and perfect good-humour gave one the same sort of *bien être* as a well-stuffed arm-chair and a warm hearth-rug.

In the course of conversation, speaking of Yvan's accounts of his travels (the Marquis was first Secretary to the Chinese Embassy which Yvan accompanied), he said, " C'était faux d'un bout à l'autre; mais c'était spirituel, paradoxal, amusant, — enfin *tout ce qu'il fallait pour un journal.*" Another day he observed that the famous words of Napoleon to his Egyptian army, " Forty centuries look down on you from the summits of these pyramids," were characteristic of the French national feeling, as those of Nelson, " England expects the man to make his duty," were of the English. This is a fair specimen of the correctness with which one generally hears English quoted; and we often reminded ourselves that it was a mirror in which we might see our own German.

Liszt's conversation is charming. I never met with a person whose manner of telling a story was so piquant. The last evening but one that he called on us, wishing to express his pleasure in G.'s article about him, he very ingeniously conveyed that expression in a story about Spontini and Berlioz. Spontini visited Paris while Liszt was living there, and haunted the opera, — a stiff, self-important personage, with high shirt-collars, the least attractive individual imaginable: Liszt turned up his own collars, and swelled out his person, so as to give us a vivid idea of the man. Every one would have been glad to get out of Spontini's way, — indeed elsewhere " on feignait de le croire mort," but at Paris, as he was a member of the Institute, it was necessary to recognise his existence. Liszt met him at Erard's more than once. On one of these occasions Liszt observed to him that Berlioz was a great admirer of his (Spontini's), whereupon Spontini burst into a ter-

rible invective against Berlioz as a man who, with the like of him, was ruining art, &c. Shortly after the "Vestale' was performed, and forthwith appeared an enthusiastic article by Berlioz on Spontini's music. The next time Liszt met him of the high collars, he said, "You see I was not wrong in what I said about Berlioz's admiration of you." Spontini swelled in his collars, and replied, "Monsieur, Berlioz a du talent comme critique!"

Liszt's replies were always felicitous and characteristic. Talking of Mme. d'Agoult, he told us that when her novel, "Nelida," appeared, in which Liszt himself is pilloried as a delinquent, he asked her, "Mais pourquoi avez-vous tellement maltraité ce pauvre Lehmann?" The first time we were asked to breakfast at his house, the Altenburg, we were shown into the garden, where, in a saloon formed by overarching trees, the *déjeuner* was set out. We found Hoffmann von Fallersleben, the lyric poet, Dr. Schade, — a *Gelehrter*, and Cornelius. Presently came a Herr — or Doctor — Raff, a musician, who has recently published a volume called "Wagnerfrage." Soon after we were joined by Liszt and the Princess Marie, an elegant, gentle-looking girl of seventeen, and last by the Princess Wittgenstein, with her nephew, Prince Eugène, and a young French artist, a pupil of Scheffer. The Princess was tastefully dressed in a morning robe of some semi-transparent white material, lined with orange colour, which formed the bordering and ornamented the sleeves, a black lace jacket, and a piquant cap set on the summit of her comb, and trimmed with violet colour. When the cigars came, Hoffmann was requested to read some of his poetry, and he gave us a bacchanalian poem with great spirit. I sat next to

Liszt, and my great delight was to watch him and observe the sweetness of his expression. Genius, benevolence, and tenderness beam from his whole countenance, and his manners are in perfect harmony with it. Then came the thing I had longed for, — his playing. I sat near him, so that I could see both his hands and face. For the first time in my life I beheld real inspiration, — for the first time I heard the true tones of the piano. He played one of his own compositions, — one of a series of religious fantasies. There was nothing strange or excessive about his manner. His manipulation of the instrument was quiet and easy, and his face was simply grand, — the lips compressed and the head thrown a little backward. When the music expressed quiet rapture or devotion, a sweet smile flitted over his features; when it was triumphant, the nostrils dilated. There was nothing petty or egoistic to mar the picture. Why did not Scheffer paint him thus, instead of representing him as one of the three Magi? But it just occurs to me that Scheffer's idea was a sublime one. There are the two aged men who have spent their lives in trying to unravel the destinies of the world, and who are looking for the Deliverer, — for the light from on high. Their young fellow-seeker, having the fresh inspiration of early life, is the first to discern the herald star, and his ecstasy reveals it to his companions. In this young Magus, Scheffer has given a portrait of Liszt; but even here, where he might be expected to idealise unrestrainedly, he falls short of the original. It is curious that Liszt's face is the type that one sees in all Scheffer's pictures, — at least, in all I have seen.

In a little room which terminates the suite at

the Altenburg, there is a portrait of Liszt, also by Scheffer, — the same of which the engraving is familiar to every one. This little room is filled with memorials of Liszt's triumphs and the worship his divine talent has won. It was arranged for him by the Princess, in conjunction with the Arnims, in honour of his birthday. There is a medallion of him by Schwanthaler, a bust by an Italian artist, also a medallion by Rietschl, — very fine, — and cabinets full of jewels and precious things, — the gifts of the great. In the music *salon* stand Beethoven's and Mozart's pianos. Beethoven's was a present from Broadwood, and has a Latin inscription intimating that it was presented as a tribute to his illustrious genius. One evening Liszt came to dine with us at the Erb Prinz, and introduced M. Rubinstein, a young Russian, who is about to have an opera of his performed in Weimar. Our expenses at Weimar, including wine and washing, were £2 6*s.* per week. Dear Weimar! We were sorry to say good-bye to it, with its pleasant group of friends. On the 4th of November, after a stay of just three months, we turned our backs on it "to seek fresh streets and faces new" at Berlin.

Berlin, Recollections, Nov. 1854, to March, 1855.

There are certain persons without any physiognomy, the catalogue of whose features, as item a Roman nose, item a pair of black eyes, &c., gives you the entire contents of their faces. There is no difference of opinion about the looks of such people. All the world is agreed either that they are pretty or ugly. So it is with Berlin. Every one tells you it is an uninteresting modern city, with broad, monotonous streets; and when you see it, you cannot for the life of you get up an emotion of surprise, or make

a remark about the place which you have not heard before.

The day after our arrival was Sunday, 6th November: the sun shone brightly, and we went to walk in the Linden, elbowing our way among the *promeneurs endimanchés*, who looked remarkably smart and handsome after the Thuringians. We had not gone far when we met a nice-looking old gentleman, with an order round his neck, and a gold-headed cane in his hand, who exclaimed, on seeing G., " Ist 's möglich? " and then bade him heartily welcome. I saw at once it was the Varnhagen of whom I had heard so often. His niece, arrayed in smiles and a pink bonnet, was with him.

For the first six weeks, when the weather permitted, we took long walks in the Thiergarten, where the straight and uniform avenues of insignificant trees contrasted very disadvantageously with the charming variety of our beloved park at Weimar. Still we now and then noticed a beautiful wintry effect, especially in the part most remote from the town, where the trees are finer and the arrangements more varied. One walk, which skirted the Thiergarten on the right-hand side coming from the town, we were particularly fond of, because it gave us on one side an open view, with water and a boat or two, which, touched by the magic of sunshine, was pleasant to see. At Berlin it was " a day of small things " with regard to the beautiful, and we made much of little.

Our little circle of acquaintances was very agreeable and varied. Varnhagen was a real treasure to G., for his library supplied all the deficiencies of the public one, where to ask for books was generally like " sinking buckets into empty wells."

He is a man of real culture, kindliness, and polish (Germanly speaking); and he has besides that thorough liberalism, social, religious, and political, which sets the mind at ease in conversation, and delivers it from the fear of running against some prejudice, or coming suddenly on the sunk fence of some miserable limitation. The first morning he called on us he talked of his terrible disappointment in Carlyle, a subject to which he often returned. He evidently felt an antipathy to the "Teufelsdröckh," which indeed it was not difficult to understand from the mere *manière d'être* of the two men. They had corresponded for years before they saw each other; and Varnhagen was, and is, a great admirer of Carlyle's best work, but he was thoroughly repelled by his rough paradoxical talk, and, more justifiably, by the despotic doctrines which it has been his humour to teach of late. We were amused to hear that Carlyle said he should think no one could die at Berlin, "for in beds *without curtains* what Christian could give up the ghost?"

At Varnhagen's we met for the first time Professor Stahr, who was there with Fanny Lewald, Fräulein Solmar, Frau Muisch, Dr. Ring, Dr. Vehse, Gräfin von Kalkreuth, and Director Wilhelm Schadow, author of "Der Moderne Vasari." We talked of Goethe. Varnhagen brought out autographs and portraits, and read us an epigram of his own on the want of liberality which Goethe's family show about opening his house to the public. He showed us a portrait of Kleist, who shot himself, in company with Frau Vogel, near an inn on the way to Potsdam. There was no love affair between them: they were both thoroughly unhappy, — he poor and hopeless for the future, and she

suffering from an incurable disease. In the evening they both wrote, on a single sheet of paper, letters to their friends, communicating their intention (this sheet Varnhagen possesses). Early in the morning they rose, took a cup of coffee, went to the brink of a piece of water in the neighbourhood of the inn, and there shot themselves.

Du Bois Reymond spoke very decidedly of the German civilisation as inferior to the English.

Varnhagen, when well, is a regular visitor at Fräulein Solmar's, who for many years has kept an open *salon* for her friends every evening but one in the week. Here the three-cornered chair next the sofa was reserved for him, except when General Pfuel was there. This General Pfuel is a fine specimen of an old soldier, who is at the same time a man of instruction and of strong social sympathies. He has been in the service of Prussia, has been within a hair's-breadth of being frozen to death, "and so following." He spoke French admirably, and always had something interesting and characteristic to tell or say. His appreciatory groans always in the right place when G. was reading "Shylock," did us both good under the chills of a German audience. Fräulein Solmar is a remarkably accomplished woman, — probably between fifty and sixty, but of that agreeable *Wesen* which is so free from anything startling in person or manner, and so at home in everything one can talk of, that you think of her simply as a delightful presence, and not as a woman of any particular age. She converses perfectly in French, well in English, and well also, as we were told, in Italian. There is not the slightest warmth of manner or expression in her, but always the same even cheerfulness and intelligence, — in fact, she

is the true type of the mistress of the *salon.* During the first half of our stay in Berlin, we went about once a week to her house; but bad health and bad weather kept us away during the last six weeks, except for one or two evenings. Baron Sternberg, the novelist, used frequently to glide in when we were there, and cast strange cold glances around, talking quietly to Fräulein Assing or some other lady who sat in a distant parallel of latitude.

One evening a Frenchman there amused us by saying that he found in Meyerbeer's "Huguenots" the whole spirit of the epoch of Charles IX. "Lisez les Chroniques" — "de Froissart?" suggested Mlle. Solmar. "Oui, quelque chose comme ça; ou bien les Chroniques de Brantôme ou de *Mérimée;* et vous trouverez que Meyerbeer a parfaitement exprimé tout cela; du moins c'est ce que je trouve, moi." I said, "Mais peut-être, Monsieur, c'est votre génie à vous qui a fait entrer les idées dans la musique." He answered with complacent deprecation. G. looked immovably serious, but was inwardly tickled by the audacity of my compliment, and the evident acceptance of it.

A still more interesting acquaintance was Professor Gruppe, who has written great books on the Greek drama and on Philosophy; has been a political writer; is a lyric and epic poet; has invented a beautiful kind of marbled paper for binding books; is an enthusiastic huntsman, and withal, the most simple kind-hearted creature in the world. His little wife, who is about thirty years younger than himself, seems to adore him, and it is charming to see the group they and their two little children make in their dwelling up endless flights of stairs in the Leipziger Platz. Very pleasant even-

ings we had there, chatting or playing whist, or listening to readings of Gruppe's poems. We used to find him in a grey cloth *Schlafrock*, which I fancy was once a great-coat, and a brown velvet cap surmounting his thin grey hairs. I never saw a combination at all like that which makes up Gruppe's character. Talent, fertility, and versatility, that seem to indicate a fervid temperament, and yet no scintillation of all this in his talk and manner; on the contrary, he seems slow at apprehending other people's ideas, and is of an almost childish *naïveté* in the value he attaches to poor jokes and other trivialities. *Apropos* of jokes, we noticed that during the whole seven months of our stay in Germany we never heard one witticism, or even one felicitous idea or expression, from a German.

Gruppe has a delightful library, with rare books, and books too good to be rare; and we often applied to him for some of them. He lent me "Lessing," and that is an additional circumstance to remember with pleasure in connection with the Laocoon. He one evening gave us an interesting account of his work on the cosmic system of the Greeks, and read us a translation by himself of one of the Homeric hymns, — Aphrodite, — which is very beautiful, a sort of *Gegenstück* to "Der Gott und die Bajadere;" and generally we were glad when he took up the book. He read us a specimen of his epic poem, "Firdusi," which pleased us. The fable on which this poem is founded is fine. The Sultan had engaged Firdusi to write a great poem on his exploits, and had promised to pay for this 100,000 pieces (gold being understood). Firdusi had delighted in the thought of this sum, which he intended to devote to the benefit of his native

city. When the poem was delivered, and the sack of money given to Firdusi, he found that the pieces were silver! He burst into a song of scorn against the sultan, and paid the miserable sum to his bath man. Gruppe thinks Shakspeare more extensively sold in Germany than any other book, except the Bible and Schiller! One night we attempted "Brag" or "Pocher," but Gruppe presently became alarmed at G.'s play, and said, "Das würde an zwölf Groschen reichen!" He drew some Jews' faces with a pen admirably.

We were invited to meet Waagen, whom we found a very intelligent and amusing man. He told us a story about Goethe, who said of some one, "I thank thee, Almighty God, that Thou hast produced no second edition of this man!" and an amusing judgment passed on Goethe himself, that he was 'Kein dummer Mann!" Also a story of a lady who went to see him as an intellectual adorer and began to spout to him as his masterpiece, "Fest gemauert in der Erden," [1] &c.

Another pleasant friend was Edward Magnus, the portrait-painter, an acute, intelligent, kind-hearted man, with real talent in his art. He was the only German we met with who seemed conscious of his countrymen's deficiencies. He showed in every possible way a hearty desire to do us service, — sent us books, came to chat with us, showed us his portraits, and when we were going away, brought us lithographs of some paintings of his, that we might carry away a remembrance of him. He has travelled very extensively, and had much intercourse with distinguished people, and these means of culture have had some of their best effects on his fine temperament and direct truthful mind.

[1] First line of Schiller's "Song of the Bell."

He told us a rich story about Carlyle. At a dinner-party, given by Magnus in his honour, Wiese and Cornelius were deploring Goethe's want of evangelical sentiment. Carlyle was visibly uneasy, fumbling with his dinner-napkin. At last he broke out thus: "Meine Herren, kennen Sie die Anekdote von dem Manne der die Sonne lästerte, weil sie ihn seine Cigarre nicht anstecken liess?" [1]

In the little room where we used to be ushered to wait for him, there was a portrait of Thorwaldsen and one of Mendelssohn, both of whom he knew well. I was surprised to find in his *atelier* the original of the portrait of Jenny Lind, with which I was so familiar. He was going to send it, together with Sontag's portrait, to the exhibition at Paris. His brother, the chemist, was also a bright good-natured-looking man. We were invited to a large evening party at his house, and found very elegant rooms, with a remarkable assemblage of celebrated men, — Johannes Müller, Du Bois Reymond, Rose, Ehrenberg, &c., &c. Some of the women were very pretty and well dressed. The supper, brought round on trays, was well appointed; and altogether the party was well managed.

We spent one evening with Professor Stahr and his wife, — Fanny Lewald, — after their marriage. Stahr has a copy of the charming miniature of Schiller, taken when he was about thirty, — a miniature in the possession of a certain Madame von Kalb. There are the long *Gänsehals*,[2] the aquiline nose, the blue eyes and auburn hair. It

[1] "Gentlemen, do you know the story of the man who railed at the sun because it would not light his cigar?"

[2] Goose-neck.

is a most real and striking portrait. I saw also a portrait and bust of Madame d'Agoult here, both rather handsome. The first evening Stahr told us some of the grievances which the Prussians have to bear from their Government, and amongst the rest the vexatious necessity for a "concession" or licence, before any, the simplest vocation, can be entered on. He observed, with justice, that the English are apt to suppose the German Revolution of '48 was mere restlessness and aping of other nations, when in fact there were real oppressions which the Germans had to bear, and which they had borne with a patience that the English would not imitate for a month. By far the most distinguished-looking man we saw at Berlin, and indeed next to Liszt in Germany, was Rauch the sculptor. Schöll had given G. a letter for him, and soon after it had been left at his house he called on us in the evening, and at once won our hearts by his beautiful person and the benignant and intelligent charm of his conversation. He is indeed the finest old man I ever saw, — more than seventy-six, I believe, but perfectly upright, even stately in his carriage. His features are harmonious, his complexion has a delicate freshness, his silky white hair waves gracefully round his high forehead, and his brown eyes beam with benevolence and intelligence. He is above the common height, and his stature and beauty together ennoble the grey working surtout and cap which he wears in his *atelier* into a picturesque and distinguished costume. The evening he was with us he talked delightfully of Goethe, dwelling especially on his lovable nature. He described very graphically Goethe's way of introducing subjects, showing plates, &c., bringing in the cast of Schiller's skull, and talking of it and

other little particulars of interest. We went one morning to his *atelier*, and found him superintending his pupil's work at a large group representing Moses with his hands held up by Aaron and Hur. It was extremely interesting to me to see Rauch's original little clay model of this group, for I had never seen statuary in that first stage before. The intense expression of entreaty in the face of the Moses was remarkable. But the spirit of this group is so alien to my sympathies that I could feel little pleasure in the idea of its production. On the other hand, my heart leaped at the sight of old Kant's quaint figure, of which Rauch is commissioned to produce a colossal statue for Königsberg. In another *atelier*, where the work is in a different stage, we saw a splendid marble monument, nearly completed, of the late King of Hanover. Pitiable that genius and spotless white marble should be thrown away on such human trash! Our second visit to Rauch's *atelier* was paid shortly before we left Berlin. The group of Moses, Aaron, and Hur was clothed up, and the dark-eyed olive-complexioned pupil was at work on a pretty little figure of Hope. — a child stepping forward with upturned face, a bunch of flowers in her hand. In the other *atelier* we saw a bust of Schleiermacher which, with the equestrian statue of Fritz and its pedestal, Rauch was going to send to the Paris Exhibition. Schleiermacher's face is very delicately cut, and indicates a highly susceptible temperament. The colossal head of Fritz, seen on a level with one's eye, was perfectly startling from its living expression. One can't help fancying that the head is thinking and that the eyes are seeing.

Dessoir the actor was another pleasant variety

in our circle of acquaintance. He created in us a real respect and regard for him, not only by his sincere devotion to his art, but by the superiority of feeling which shone through all the little details of his conduct and conversation. Of lowly birth and entirely self-taught, he is by nature a gentleman. Without a single physical gift as an actor, he succeeds, by force of enthusiasm and conscientious study, in arriving at a representation which commands one's attention and feelings. I was very much pleased by the simplicity with which he one day said, "Shakspeare ist mein Gott; ich habe keinen anderen Gott;" and indeed one saw that his art was a religion to him. He said he found himself inevitably led into sing-song declamation by Schiller, but with Shakspeare it was impossible to be declamatory. It was very agreeable to have him as a companion now and then in our walks, and to have him read or discuss Shakspeare for an hour or two in the evening. He told us an amusing story about his early days. When he was a youth of sixteen or seventeen, acting at Spandau, he walked to Berlin (about nine miles) and back in the evening, accompanied by a watchmaker named Naundorff, an enthusiast for the theatre. On their way Dessoir declaimed at the top of his voice, and was encouraged by the applause of his companion to more and more exertion of lungs and limbs, so that people stared at them, and followed them as if they thought them two madmen. This watchmaker was Louis XVII.! Dessoir also imitated admirably Aldridge's mode of advancing to kill Duncan, — like a wild Indian lurking for a not much wilder beast. He paid us the very pretty attention of getting up a dinner for us at Dietz's, and inviting Rötscher and Förs-

ter to meet us; and he supplied us with tickets for the theatre, which, however, was a pleasure we used sparingly. The first time we went was to see "Nathan der Weise," — a real enjoyment, for the elegant theatre was new to us, and the scenery was excellent, — better than I saw there on any subsequent occasion. Döring performed Nathan, and we thus saw him for the first time to great advantage, — for though he drags down this part, as he does all others, the character of Nathan sets limits which he cannot overstep; and though we lose most of its elevation in Döring's acting, we get, *en revanche*, an admirable ease and naturalness. His fine clear voice and perfect enunciation told excellently in the famous monologue, and in the whole scene with Saladin. Our hearts swelled and the tears came into our eyes as we listened to the noble words of dear Lessing, whose great spirit lives immortally in this crowning work of his.

Our great anxiety was to see and hear Johanna Wagner, so we took tickets for the "Orpheus," which Mlle. Solmar told us she thought her best part. We were thoroughly delighted both with her and her music. The caricatures of the Furies, the ballet-girls, and the butcher-like Greek shades in Elysium, the ugly screaming Eurydice, and the droll appearance of Timzek as Amor, in which she looked like a shop-girl who has donned a masquerade dress impromptu, without changing her head-dress, — all these absurdities were rather an amusement than a drawback to our pleasure; for the Orpheus was perfect in himself, and looked like a noble horse among mules and donkeys.

Our days are so accurately parcelled out that my time for letter-writing is rather restricted, and for every letter I write I have to leave out something

which we have learned to think necessary. We have been to hear "Fidelio" this evening, — not well executed, except so far as the orchestra was concerned; but the divine music positively triumphs over the defects of execution. One is entirely wrapt in the *idea* of the composer. Last week we had "Orpheus and Eurydice," and I heard, for the first time, at once an opera of Gluck's and Johanna Wagner. It is one of the glories of Berlin to give Gluck's operas, and it is also something of a glory to have "die Wagner." She is really a fine actress and a fine singer: her voice is not ravishing, but she is mistress of it. I thought of you that evening, and wished you could hear and see what I know would interest you greatly, — I refer rather to Gluck's opera than to Johanna Wagner. The scene in which Orpheus (Johanna Wagner) enters Tartarus, is met by the awful Shades, and charms them into ecstatic admiration till they make way for him to pass on, is very fine. The voices — except in the choruses — are all women's voices; and there are only three characters, — Orpheus, Amor, and Eurydice. One wonders that Pluto does not come as a basso; and one would prefer Mercury as a tenor to Amor in the shape of an ugly German soprano; but Gluck wished it otherwise, and the music is delightful. I am reading a charming book by Professor Stahr, — who is one of our acquaintances here, — "Torso: Kunst, Künstler, und Kunst Werke der Alten." It feeds the fresh interest I am now feeling in art. Professor Stahr is a very erudite man, and, what is very much rarer amongst Germans, a good writer, who knows how to select his materials, and has, above all, a charming talent for description. We saw at his house the other night the first por-

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 9th Jan. 1855.

trait of Schiller, which *convinces* me of a likeness to him. It is the copy of a miniature which has never been engraved. The face is less beautiful than that of the ordinary busts and portraits, but is very remarkable, — the eyes blue, the complexion very fair (the picture was taken in his youth), and the hair sunny. He has the long "gooseneck," which he describes as belonging to Carl Moor in the "Robbers," and the forehead is *fuyant* in correspondence with the skull. The piteous contrast there is between the anxiety poor Schiller is constantly expressing about a livelihood, — about the thalers he has to pay for this and the thalers he has to receive for that, — and Goethe's perfect ease in that respect! For the "History of the Netherlands" he got little more than fifteen shillings per sheet. I am very much interested in Professor Gruppe as a type of the German *Gelehrter*. He has written books on everything, — on the Greek drama, a great book on the cosmic system of the Greeks, an Epic, numberless lyric poems, &c.; he has a philosophical work and a history of literature in the press; is professor of philosophy at the University; is enthusiastic about boar-hunting, and has written a volume of hunting poems, — and *ich weiss nicht was*. Withal he is as simple as a child. When we go to see them in the evening, we find him wrapt in a moth-eaten grey coat and a cap on his head. Then he reads us a translation of one of the Homeric hymns, and goes into the most naïve *impersonal* ecstasy at the beauty of his own poetry (which is really good). The other night he read us part of an epic which is still in MS., and is to be read before the king, — such is the fashion here. And his little wife, who is about twenty years younger than himself, listens

with loving admiration. Altogether, they and their two little children are a charming picture.

We went to only one concert, for which Vivier was kind enough to send us tickets. It was given by him and Roger, assisted by Arabella Goddard and Johanna Wagner. Roger's singing of the "Erl King" was a treat not to be forgotten. He gave the full effect to Schubert's beautiful and dramatic music; and his way of falling from melody into awe-struck speech in the final words "*War todt*" abides with one. I never felt so thoroughly the beauty of that divine ballad before. The king was present in all his toothlessness and blinkingness; and the new princess from Anhalt Dessau, young and delicate-looking, was there too. Arabella Goddard played the "Harmonious Blacksmith" charmingly, and then Wagner sang badly two ineffective German songs, and Halévy's duet from the "Reine de Chypre" with Roger.

Berlin, Recollections, Nov. 1854, to March, 1855.

Vivier is amusing. He says Germans take off their hats on all possible pretexts, not for the sake of politeness, but *pour être embarrassants.* They have wide streets, simply to embarrass you, by making it impossible to descry a shop or a friend. A German always has *three* gloves, — "On ne sait pas pourquoi." There is a dog-tax in order to maintain a narrow *trottoir* in Berlin, and every one who keeps a dog feels authorised to keep the *trottoir* and move aside for no one. If he has two dogs, he drives out of the *trottoir* the man who has only one: the very dogs begin to be aware of it. If you kick one when he is off the *trottoir*, he will bear it patiently, but on the *trottoir* he resents it vehemently. He gave us quite a bit of Molière in a description of a mystification at a restaurant.

He says to the waiter, — "Vous voyez ce monsieur-là. C'est le pauvre M. Colignon." (Il faut qu'il soit quelqu'un qui prend très peu, — une tasse de café ou comme ça, et qui ne dépense pas trop.) "Je suis son ami. Il est fou. Je le garde. Combien doit-il payer?" "Un franc." "Voilà." Then Vivier goes out. Presently the so-called M. Colignon asks how much he has to pay, and is driven to exasperation by the reiterated assurance of the waiter, — "C'est payé, M. Colignon."

The first work of art really worth looking at that one sees at Berlin are the "Rosse-bändiger" in front of the palace. They are by a sculptor named Clodt, who made horses his especial study; and certainly, to us, they eclipsed the famous Colossi at Monte Cavallo, casts of which are in the new museum.

The collection of pictures at the old museum has three gems, which remain in the imagination, — Titian's Daughter, Correggio's Jupiter and Io, and his Head of Christ on the Handkerchief. I was pleased also to recognise among the pictures the one by Jan Steen, which Goethe describes in the "Wahlverwandschaften" as the model of a *tableau vivant*, presented by Luciane and her friends. It is the daughter being reproved by her father, while the mother is emptying her wine-glass. It is interesting to see the statue of Napoleon, the worker of so much humiliation to Prussia, placed opposite that of Julius Cæsar.

They were very happy months we spent at Berlin, in spite of the bitter cold which came on in January and lasted almost till we left. How we used to rejoice in the idea of our warm room and coffee as we battled our way from dinner against the wind and snow! Then came the delightful

long evening, in which we read Shakspeare, Goethe, Heine, and Macaulay, with German *Pfefferkuchen* and *Semmels* at the end to complete the *noctes cenæque deûm*.

We used often to turn out for a little walk in the evening, when it was not too cold, to refresh ourselves by a little pure air as a change from the stove-heated room. Our favourite walk was along the Linden, in the broad road between the trees. We used to pace to old Fritz's monument, which loomed up dark and mysterious against the sky. Once or twice we went along the gas-lighted walk towards Kroll's. One evening in our last week, we went on to the bridge leading to the Friedrichstadt, and there by moon- and gas-light saw the only bit of picturesqueness Berlin afforded us. The outline of the Schloss towards the water is very varied, and a light in one of the windows near the top of a tower was a happy accident. The row of houses on the other side of the water was shrouded in indistinctness, and no ugly object marred the scene. The next day, under the light of the sun it was perfectly prosaic.

Our *table d'hôte* at the Hôtel de l'Europe was so slow in its progress from one course to another, and there was so little encouragement to talk to our neighbours, that we used to take our books by way of beguiling the time. Lessing's "Hamburgische Briefe," which I am not likely to take up again, will thus remain associated in my memory with my place at the *table d'hôte*. The company here, as almost everywhere else in Berlin, was sprinkled with officers. Indeed the swords of officers threaten one's legs at every turn in the streets, and one sighs to think how these unproductive consumers of *Wurst*, with all their blue and

scarlet broadcloth, are maintained out of the pockets of the community. Many of the officers and privates are startlingly tall; indeed some of them would match, I should think, with the longest of Friedrich Wilhelm's *lange Kerle.*

It was a bitterly cold sleety morning, — the 11th of March, when we set out from Berlin, leaving behind us, alas! G.'s rug, which should have kept his feet warm on the journey. Our travelling companions to Cologne were fat Madame Roger, her little daughter, and her dog, and a Queen's messenger, — a very agreeable man, who afterwards persuaded another of the same vocation to join us for the sake of warmth. This poor man's teeth were chattering with cold, though he was wrapped in fur; and we, all fur-less as we were, pitied him, and were thankful that at least we were not feverish and ill, as he evidently was. We saw the immortal old town of Wolfenbüttel at a distance, as we rolled along: beyond this there was nothing of interest in our first day's journey, and the only incident was the condemnation of poor Madame Roger's dog to the dog-box, apart from its mistress with her warm cloaks. She remonstrated in vain with a brutal German official, and it was amusing to hear him say to her in German, "Wenn sie Deutsch nicht verstehen können." "Eh bien, — prenez la." "Ah! quel satan de pays!" was her final word, as she held out the shivering little beast. We stayed at Cologne, and next morning walked out to look at the cathedral again. Melancholy as ever in its impression upon me! From Cologne to Brussels we had some rather interesting companions, in two French artists who were on their way from Russia. Strange beings they looked to us at first in their dirty linen, Rus-

sian caps, and other queer equipments; but in this, as in many other cases, I found that a first impression was an extremely mistaken one, for instead of being, as I imagined, common uncultivated men, they were highly intelligent.

At Brussels, as we took our supper, we had the pleasure of looking at Berlioz's fine head and face, he being employed in the same way on the other side of the table. The next morning to Calais.

*They were pleasant days, these at Weimar and Berlin, and they were working days. Mr. Lewes was engaged in completing his life of Goethe, which had been begun some time before, but which was now for the most part rewritten. At Weimar George Eliot wrote the article on Victor Cousin's "Madame de Sablé" for the "Westminster Review." It was begun on 5th August and sent off on 8th September. At Berlin she nearly finished the translation of Spinoza's "Ethics," — begun on 5th November, — and wrote an article on Vehse's "Court of Austria," which was begun on 23d January and finished 4th March, 1855. Besides this writing, I find the following among the books that were engaging their attention; and in collecting the names from George Eliot's Journal, I have transcribed any remarks she makes on them: —*

Sainte-Beuve, Goethe's "Wahlverwandschaften," "Rameau's Neffe," "Egmont," "The Hoggarty Diamond," Moore's "Life of Sheridan," — a first-rate specimen of bad biographical writing; "Götz" and the "Bürger General," Uhland's poems, "Wilhelm Meister," Rosenkranz on the Faust Sage, Heine's poems, Shakspeare's plays ("Merchant of Venice," "Romeo and Juliet," "Julius Cæsar," — very much struck with the masculine style of this play, and its vigorous moderation, compared with "Romeo and Juliet," — "Antony and Cleopatra," "Henry IV.," "Othello," "As You Like

It," "Lear," — sublimely powerful, — "Taming of the Shrew," "Coriolanus," "Twelfth Night," "Measure for Measure," "Midsummer Night's Dream," "Winter's Tale," "Richard III.," "Hamlet"); Lessing's "Laocoon," — the most un-German of all the German books that I have ever read. The style is strong, clear, and lively; the thoughts acute and pregnant. It is well adapted to rouse an interest both in the classics and in the study of art; "Emilia Galotti" seems to me a wretched mistake of Lessing's. The Roman myth of Virginius is grand, but the situation transported to modern times and divested of its political bearing is simply shocking. Read "Briefe über Spinoza" (Jacobi's), "Nathan der Weise," Fanny Lewald's "Wandlungen," "Minna von Barnhelm," "Italiänische Reise," the "Residence in Rome:" a beautiful description of Rome and the Coliseum by moonlight, — a fire made in the Coliseum sending its smoke, silvered by the moonlight, through the arches of the mighty walls. Amusing story of Goethe's landlady's cat worshipping Jupiter by licking his beard, — a miracle in her esteem, explained by Goethe as a discovery the cat had made of the oil lodging in the undulations of the beard. "Residence in Naples," — pretty passage about a star seen through a chink in the ceiling as he lay in bed. It is remarkable that when Goethe gets to Sicily, he is for the first time in Italy enthusiastic in his descriptions of natural beauty. Read Scherr's "Geschichte Deutscher Cultur und Sitte," — much interested in his sketch of German poetry in the middle ages: "Iphigenia." Looked into the "Xenien," and amused ourselves with their pointlessness. "Hermann und Dorothea." "Tasso," "Wanderjahre," — *à mourir*

*d'ennui*, — Heine's "Geständnisse," — immensely amused with the wit of it in the first fifty pages, but afterwards it burns low, and the want of principle and purpose make it wearisome. Lessing's "Hamburgische Briefe." Read Goethe's wonderful observations on Spinoza. Particularly struck with the beautiful modesty of the passage in which he says he cannot presume to say that he thoroughly understands Spinoza. Read "Dichtung und Wahrheit," Knight's "Studies of Shakspeare." Talked of the "Wahlverwandschaften" with Stahr, — he finding fault with the *dénouement*, which I defended. Read Stahr's "Torso," — too long-winded a style for reading aloud. Knight's "History of Painting." Compared several scenes of "Hamlet" in Schlegel's translation with the original. It is generally very close, and often admirably well done: but Shakspeare's strong concrete language is almost always weakened. For example, "Though this hand were *thicker than* itself in brother's blood," is rendered, "Auch um und um in Bruder's Blut getauchet." The prose speeches of Hamlet lose all their felicity in the translation. Read Stahr on the Eginetan Sculptures, "Die Neue Melusine," "West-Östliche Divan," Gervinus on Shakspeare, — found it unsatisfactory, — Stahr's "Ein Jahr in Italien," — the description of Florence excellent. Read the wondrously beautiful "Römische Elegien" again, and some of the Venetian Epigrams, Vehse's "Court of Austria," — called on Miss Assing to try and borrow the book from Varnhagen. He does not possess it, so G. called on Vehse, and asked him to lend it to me. He was very much pleased to do so. Read the "Zueignung," the "Gedichte," and several of the ballads. Looked

through Wraxall's "Memoirs." Read Macaulay's "History of England." Wrote article on Stahr.

*This writing and reading, combined with visiting, theatre-going, and opera-going, make a pretty full life for these eight months, — a striking contrast to the coming months of complete social quietness in England. Both lives had their attractions, the superficial aspects of which may be summed up in a passage from the Journal, dated 13th March, 1855, on arrival at the Lord Warden Hotel at Dover: —*

English mutton and an English fire were likely to be appreciated by creatures who had had eight months of Germany, with its questionable meat and its stove-heated rooms. The taste and quietude of a first-rate English hotel were also in striking contrast with the heavy finery, the noise, and the indiscriminate smoking of German inns. But after all, Germany is no bad place to live in; and the Germans, to counterbalance their want of taste and politeness, are at least free from the bigotry of exclusiveness of their more refined cousins. I even long to be amongst them again, — to see Dresden, and Munich, and Nürnberg, and the Rhine country. May the day soon come!

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER VI

JULY, 1854, TO MARCH, 1855

Leaves London with Mr. Lewes for Antwerp — Rubens's pictures — Cologne — Dr. Brabant and Strauss — Weimar — Schöll — The Dichter Zimmer — Sauppe — Tiefurt — Ettersburg — Arthur Helps — Gabel-Bach and Kickel-hahn — Liszt — Wagner's operas — "Der Freischütz" — Schiller's house — Goethe's house — Gartenhaus — Ober Weimar — The Webicht — Marquis de Ferrière — Liszt anecdotes — Cornelius — Raff — Princess Wittgenstein — Liszt's playing — Scheffer's picture — Expenses at Weimar — Leave for Berlin — Meet Varnhagen — Thiergarten — Acquaintances in Berlin — Fräulein Solmar — Professor Gruppe — Epic of Firdusi — Waagen — Edward Magnus — Professor Stahr and Fanny Lewald — Rauch the sculptor — Kant's statue — Dessoir the actor — "Nathan der Weise" — Döring's acting — Johanna Wagner — Letter to Miss Hennell — "Fidelio" — Reading Stahr's "Torso" — Likeness of Schiller — Vivier — Roger and Arabella Goddard — The Rosse-bändiger — Pictures — Cold in Berlin — View of Schloss from bridge — Leave Berlin for England — Books read — Article written on Madame de Sablé — Translation of Spinoza's "Ethics" — Article on Vehse's "Court of Austria" — Article on Stahr.

## CHAPTER VII

*MARCH* 14. — Took lodgings at 1 Sydney Place, Dover. Journal, March, 1855.

*March* 15. — A lovely day. As I walked up the Castle hill this afternoon, the town, with its background of softly rounded hills shrouded in sleepy haze, its little lines of water looking golden in the sun, made a charming picture. I have written the preface to the "Third Book of Ethics," read Scherr, and Shakspeare's "Venus and Adonis."

*March* 16. — I read Shakspeare's "Passionate Pilgrim" at breakfast, and found a sonnet in which he expresses admiration of Spenser (Sonnet VI.): —

G. writes that this sonnet is Barnfield's. [Note written later.]

"Dowland to thee is dear, whose heavenly touch
Upon the lute doth ravish human sense;
Spenser to me, whose deep conceit is such
As, passing all conceit, needs no defence."

I must send word of this to G., who has written in his "Goethe" that Shakspeare has left no line in praise of a contemporary. I could not resist the temptation of walking out before I sat down to work. Came in at half-past ten, and translated Spinoza till nearly one. Walked out again till two. After dinner read "Two Gentlemen of Verona," and some of the Sonnets. That play disgusted me more than ever in the final scene, where Valentine, on Proteus's mere begging par-

don, when he has no longer any hope of gaining his ends, says "All that was mine in Silvia, I give thee!" Silvia standing by. Walked up the Castle hill again, and came in at six. Read Scherr, and found an important hint that I have made a mistake in a sentence of my article on Austria about the death of Franz von Sickingen.

I daresay you will be surprised to see that I write from Dover. We left Berlin on the 11th. I have taken lodgings here for a little while, until Mr. Lewes has concluded some arrangements in London; and with the aid of lovely weather, am even enjoying my solitude, though I don't mind how soon it ends. News of you all at Rosehill — how health, and business, and all other things are faring — would be very welcome to me, if you can find time for a little note of homely details. I am well and calmly happy, — feeling much stronger and clearer in mind for the last eight months of new experience. We were sorry to leave our quiet rooms and agreeable friends in Berlin, though the place itself is certainly ugly, and *am Ende* must become terribly wearisome for those who have not a vocation there. We went again and again to the new museum to look at the casts of the Parthenon Sculptures, and registered a vow that we would go to feast on the sight of the originals the first day we could spare in London. I had never cast more than a fleeting look on them before, but now I can in some degree understand the effect they produced on their first discovery.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 16th March, 1855.

*March* 25. — A note from Mr. Chapman, in which he asks me to undertake part of the Contemporary Literature for the "Westminster Review."

Journal, 1855.

*April* 18. — Came to town, to lodgings in Bayswater.

*April* 23. — Fixed on lodgings at East Sheen.

*April* 25. — Went to the British Museum.

*April* 28. — Finished article on Weimar, for "Fraser."

*During this month George Eliot was finishing the translating and revising of Spinoza's Ethics, and was still reading Scherr's book, Schrader's "German Mythology,"—a "poor book,"—"The Tempest," "Macbeth," "Niebelungenlied," "Romeo and Juliet," article on Dryden in the "Westminster," "Reineke Fuchs," "Genesis of Science," Gibbon, "Henry V.," "Henry VIII.," first, second, and third parts of "Henry VI.," "Richard II."*

*May* 2. — Came to East Sheen, and settled in our lodgings.

*May* 28. — Sent Belles Lettres section to "Westminster Review." During May several articles were written for the "Leader."

*June* 13. — Began Part IV. of Spinoza's Ethics. Began also to read Cumming for article in the "Westminster." We are reading in the evenings now Sydney Smith's letters, Boswell, Whewell's "History of Inductive Sciences," "The Odyssey," and occasionally Heine's "Reisebilder." I began the second book of the "Iliad," in Greek, this morning.

*June* 21. — Finished article on Brougham's "Lives of Men of Letters."

*June* 23. — Read "Lucrezia Floriani." We are reading White's "History of Selborne" in the evening, with Boswell and the "Odyssey."

I have good hope that you will be deeply interested in the "Life of Goethe." It is a book full

of feeling, as well as of thought and information, and I even think it will make you love Goethe as well as admire him. Eckermann's is a wonderful book, but only represents Goethe at eighty. We were fortunate enough to be in time to see poor Eckermann before his *total* death. His mind was already half gone, but the fine brow and eyes harmonised entirely with the interest we had previously felt in him. We saw him in a small lodging, surrounded by singing birds, and tended by his son, — an intelligent youth of sixteen, who showed some talent in drawing. I have written a castigation of Brougham for the "Leader," and shall be glad if your sympathy goes along with it. Varnhagen has written "Denkwürdigkeiten," and all sorts of literature, and is, or rather was, the husband of *Rahel*, the greatest of German women.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 23d June, 1855.

It was surely you who wrote the notice of the "Westminster" in the "Herald" (Coventry), which we received this morning. I am very much pleased with your appreciation of Mr. Lewes's article. You hardly do justice to Froude's article on Spinoza. I don't at all agree with Froude's own views, but I think his account of Spinoza's doctrines admirable. Mr. Lewes is still sadly ailing, — tormented with tooth- and face-ache. This is a terrible trial to us poor scribblers, to whom health is money, as well as all other things worth having. I have just been reading that Milton suffered from indigestion, — quite an affecting fact to me. I send you a letter which I have had from Barbara Smith. I think you will like to see such a manifestation of her strong, noble nature.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 21st July, 1855.

*On 1st August, 1855, Mr. Lewes went down to Ramsgate for change, taking his three boys with him for a week's holiday. Meantime George Eliot was continuing her article-writing, and in this week wrote an article for the "Leader," having written one for the same journal three weeks before. On 22d August she wrote another article for the "Leader," and on the 24th she finished the one on Cumming for the "Westminster." Mr. C. Lewes tells me that he remembers it was after reading this article that his father was prompted to say to George Eliot, whilst walking one day with her in Richmond Park, that it convinced him of the true genius in her writing. Mr. Lewes was not only an accomplished and practised literary critic, but he was also gifted with the inborn insight accompanying a fine artistic temperament, which gave unusual weight to his judgment. Up to this time he had not been quite sure of anything beyond great talent in her productions.*

*The first three weeks in September were again busily occupied in article-writing. She contributed three papers to the "Leader," as well as the Belles Lettres section for the October number of the "Westminster." On the 19th September they left East Sheen, and after spending a couple of weeks at Worthing for a sea change, they took rooms at 8 Park Shot, Richmond, which remained their home for more than three years. Here some of George Eliot's most memorable literary work was accomplished. Both she and Mr. Lewes were now working very hard for what would bring immediate profit, as they had to support not only themselves but his children and their mother. They had only one sitting-room between them; and I remember, in a walk on St. George's Hill, near Weybridge, in 1871, she told me that the scratching of another pen used to affect her nerves to such an extent that it nearly drove her wild. On the 9th October she finished an article on Margaret Fuller and Mary Wollstonecraft, and on the 12th October one on Carlyle for the "Leader," and began an article on Heine for the January number of the "Westminster." In October there are the following letters to the Brays: —*

Since you have found out the "Cumming," I write by to-day's post just to say that it *is* mine, but also to beg that you will not mention it as such to any one likely to transmit the information to London, as we are keeping the authorship a secret. The article appears to have produced a strong impression, and that impression would be a little counteracted if the author were known to be a *woman*. I have had a letter addressed "to the author of Article No. 4," begging me to print it separately, "for the good of mankind in general"! It is so kind of you to rejoice in anything I do at all well. I am dreadfully busy again, for I am going to write an article for the "Westminster Review" again, besides my other work. We enjoy our new lodgings very much, — everything is the pink of order and cleanliness.

Letter to Chas. Bray, Monday, Oct. (?) 1855.

Why you should object to Herbert Spencer speaking of Sir William Hamilton's contributions to a theory of perception as "valuable," I am unable to conceive. Sir William Hamilton has been of service to him as well as to others; and instead of repressing acknowledgments of merit in others, I should like them to be more freely given. I see no dignity or anything else that is good in ignoring one's fellow-beings. Herbert Spencer's views, like every other man's views, could not have existed without the substratum laid by his predecessors. But perhaps you mean something that I fail to perceive. Your bit of theology is very fine. Here is a delicious Hibernicism in return. In a treatise on consumption, sent yesterday, the writer says: "There is now hardly any *difference* on this subject, — at least *I* feel none." Our life has no in-

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 16th Oct. 1855.

cidents except such as take place in our own brains, and the occasional arrival of a longer letter than usual. You are always read aloud and enjoyed. Nevertheless our life is intensely occupied, and the days are far too short. We are reading Gall's "Anatomie et Physiologie du Cerveau" and Carpenter's "Comparative Physiology," aloud in the evenings; and I am trying to fix some knowledge about plexuses and ganglia in my soft brain, which generally only serves me to remember that there is something I ought to remember, and to regret that I did not put the something down in my note-book. For "Live and learn," we should sometimes read, "Live and grow stupid."

Letter to Chas. Bray, 21st Nov. 1855.

You will receive by rail to-morrow a copy of the "Life and Works of Goethe" (published on 1st November), which I hope you will accept as a keepsake from me. I should have been glad to send it you earlier, but as Mr. Lewes has sold the copyright of the first edition, he has only a small number of copies at his disposal, and so I doubted whether I ought to ask for one. I think you will find much to interest you in the book. I can't tell you how I value it, as the best product of a mind which I have every day more reason to admire and love. We have had much gratification in the expression of individual opinion. The press is very favourable, but the notices are for the most part too idiotic to give us much pleasure, except in a pecuniary point of view. I am going out to-day, for the first time for nearly a fortnight.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 29th Nov. 1855.

I have just finished a long article on Heine for the "Westminster Review," which none of you will like. *En revanche*, Mr. Lewes has written one on Lions and Lion Hunters, which you will find amusing.

*On the 12th December the Belles Lettres section for the January number of the "Westminster Review" was finished and sent off, and the next entry in the Journal is dated —*

*Dec.* 24, 1855. — For the last ten days I have done little, owing to headache and other ailments. Began the "Antigone," read Von Bohlen on Genesis, and Swedenborg. Mr. Chapman wants me to write an article on Missions and Missionaries, for the April number of the "Westminster," but I think I shall not have it ready till the July number. In the afternoon I set out on my journey to see my sister, and arrived at her house about eight o'clock, finding her and her children well.

Journal, 1855.

*Dec.* 29, 1855. — Returned to Richmond. G. away at Vernon Hill (Arthur Helps's), having gone thither on Wednesday.

*Dec.* 30, 1855. — Read the "Shaving of Shagpat" (George Meredith's).

*Dec.* 31, 1855. — Wrote a review of "Shagpat."

*Jan.* 1, 1856. — Read Kingsley's 'Greek Heroes," and began a review of Von Bohlen.

Journal, 1856.

*Jan.* 5, 1856. — G. came home.

*Jan.* 6, 1856. — Began to revise Book IV. of Spinoza's "Ethics," and continued this work through the week, being able to work but slowly. Finished Kahnis' "History of German Protestantism."

*Jan.* 16, 1856. — Received a charming letter from Barbara Smith, with a petition to Parliament that women may have a right to their earnings.

I believe there have been at least a thousand copies of the "Goethe" sold, which is a wonderfully good sale in less three months for a 30*s.*

book. We have a charming collection of letters, both from remarkable acquaintances and remarkable non-acquaintances, expressing enthusiastic delight in the book, — letters all the more delightful because they are quite spontaneous, and spring from a generous wish to let the author know how highly the writers value his work. If you want some idle reading, get the "Shaving of Shagpat," which I think you will say deserves all the praise I gave it.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 18th Jan. 1856.

*Feb.* 19, 1856. — Since the 6th January I have been occupied with Spinoza; and, except a review of Griswold's "American Poets," have done nothing else but translate the Fifth Book of the "Ethics," and revise the whole of my translation from the beginning. This evening I have finished my revision.

Journal, 1856.

I was so glad to have a little news of you. I should like to hear much oftener, but our days are so accurately parcelled out among regular occupations, that I rarely manage to do anything not included in the programme; and without reading Mrs. Barbauld on the "Inconsistency of Human Expectations," I know that receiving letters is inconsistent with not writing any. Have you seen any numbers of the "Saturday Review," a new journal, on which "all the talents" are engaged? It is not properly a newspaper, but — what its title expresses — a political and literary Review. We are delighting ourselves with Ruskin's third volume, which contains some of the finest writing I have read for a long time (among recent books). I read it aloud for an hour or so after dinner; then we jump to the old dramatists, when Mr. Lewes reads to me as long as his voice will hold out, and after this

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 19th Feb. 1856.

we wind up the evening with Rymer Jones's "Animal Kingdom," by which I get a confused knowledge of branchiæ, and such things, — perhaps, on the whole, a little preferable to total ignorance. These are our *noctes* — without *cenæ* for the present — occasionally diversified by very dramatic singing of Figaro, &c., which, I think, must alarm "that good man, the clergyman," who sits below us. We have been half laughing, half indignant over Alison's new volume of his "History of Europe," in which he undertakes to give an account of German literature.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 25th Feb. 1856.

What you tell me of Harriet Martineau interests me very much. I feel for her terrible bodily suffering, and think of her with deep respect and admiration. Whatever may have been her mistakes and weaknesses, the great and good things she has done far outweigh them; and I should be grieved if anything in her memoir should cast a momentary shadow over the agreeable image of her that the world will ultimately keep in its memory. I wish less of our piety were spent on imaginary perfect goodness, and more given to real *im*perfect goodness.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, end of Feb. 1856.

I am very happy for you to keep the sheets, and to get signatures (for the Women's Petition that they should have legal right to their own earnings). Miss Barbara Smith writes that she must have them returned to her before the 1st of March. I am glad you have taken up the cause, for I do think that, with proper provisos and safeguards, the proposed law would help to raise the position and character of women. It is one round of a long ladder stretching far beyond our lives.

*During March George Eliot wrote only the Belles Lettres section for the April number of the "Westminster," having resigned the subject of "Missions" to Harriet Martineau. She also wrote two articles for the "Saturday Review," and two for the "Leader." And there are the following letters in March to the Brays, in which allusion is made to their leaving the old home at Rosehill, owing to the unsatisfactory state of the Coventry business.*

Letter to Chas. Bray, 26th March, 1856.

We are flourishing in every way except in health. Mr. Lewes's head is still infirm, but he manages, nevertheless, to do twice as much work as other people. I am always a croaker, you know, but my ailments are of a small kind, their chief symptoms being a muddled brain; and as my pen is not of the true literary order which will run along without the help of brains, I don't get through so much work as I should like. By the way, when the Spinoza comes out, be so good as not to mention my name in connection with it. I particularly wish not to be known as the translator of the "Ethics," for reasons which it would be "too tedious to mention." You don't know what a severely practical person I am become, and what a sharp eye I have to the main chance. I keep the purse, and dole out sovereigns with all the pangs of a miser. In fact, if you were to feel my bump of acquisitiveness, I daresay you would find it in a state of inflammation, like the "veneration" of that clergyman to whom Mr. Donovan said, "Sir, you have recently been engaged in prayer." I hope you recognised your own wit about the one-eyed dissenters, which was quoted in the "Leader" some time ago. You always said no one did so much justice to your jokes as I did.

My mind is more rebellious than yours, and I can't help being saddened by the idea of you and Cara being in any other home than the dear old one. But I know that your cheerful courage is yet stronger in deed than in word. Will not business or pleasure bring you to London soon, and will you not come to see us? We can give you a bed, — not a sumptuous one, but one which you will perhaps not find intolerable for a night. I know the trip up the Thames is charming, and we should like to do it with you, but I don't think we can manage it this summer. We are going to send or take the boys (Mr. Lewes's sons) to school in Germany at midsummer, and are at present uncertain about our arrangements. If we can *send* them, we shall go to the coast as soon as the warm weather comes, and remain there for three months. But our plans are not yet crystallised.

Letter to Chas. Bray, 31st March, 1856.

After I wrote you yesterday morning we had a letter from Germany which has made Mr. Lewes incline to defer sending the boys thither till next year. But he is anxious to remove them from their present school; and in the course of our consultations on the subject, we thought of Mr. John Sibree as a person in whom we should feel confidence as to the moral influence he would exercise as a tutor. The risk of placing children with entire strangers is terrible. So I tease you with another letter to ask you if Mr. J. Sibree continues in the same position as formerly, and if he is still anxious to obtain pupils. What a delicious day. We are going to have a holiday at the Zoological Gardens.

Letter to Chas. Bray, 1st April, 1856.

Thank you for taking the trouble to write me a full account of matters so interesting to me. I

hope you will be able thoroughly to enjoy this last precious summer on the pretty lawn, where it is one of my pleasures on sunshiny days to think of you all strolling about or seated on the Bearskin. We are very thankful for the Hofwyl circular, and have almost decided to send the two eldest boys there. But it is necessary to weigh all things carefully before coming to a determination; as not being either swindlers or philanthropists, we don't like to incur obligations which there is not a reasonable certainty of our being able to meet. I am much obliged to Mr. Bray, too, for sending Mr. John Sibree's letter. Mr. Lewes had already received an answer from him declining his proposition, but we were interested to read his very characteristic letter to his sister, which proved to Mr. Lewes that I had given him a correct description of the man.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 7th April, 1856.

*The next few weeks are, perhaps, the most signally important and interesting of all in George Eliot's development. There are unmistakable signs of the rising of the sap of creative production.*

*In the middle of April Mr. Herbert Spencer, who had been away from London for some time, returned to town, and dined with them at Park Shot on the 15th, and on the 18th they went with him to Sydenham. On the 22d April George Eliot began her article on Young; and on the 29th she began to read Riehl's book,*[1] *on which she was to write another article for the "Westminster." On the 8th of May they set off for Ilfracombe, and we have the following "recollections" of that place: —*

It was a cold unfriendly day — the 8th of May — on which we set out for Ilfracombe with our hamper of glass jars, which we meant for our sea-side viva-

[1] "Land und Volk."

rium. We had to get down at Windsor, and were not sorry that the interval was long enough to let us walk round the Castle, which I had never seen before except from a distance. The famous "slopes," the avenues in the Park, and the distant landscape looked very lovely in the fresh and delicate greens of spring; and the Castle is surely the most delightful royal residence in the world. We took our places from Windsor all the way to Exeter; and at Bristol, where we had to wait three hours, the misery of my terrible headache was mitigated by the interest we felt in seeing the grand old Church of St. Mary Redcliffe, forever associated with the memory of Chatterton —

Ilfracombe, Recollections, May, 1856.

> "It stands, the maestrie of a human hand,
> The pride of Bristowe and the western land."

It was cheering the next morning after our arrival at Ilfracombe to get up with a head rather less aching, and to walk up and down the little garden of Runnymede Villa in the bright sunshine. I had a great deal of work before me, — the writing of an article on Riehl's books, which I had not half read, as well as the article on Belles Lettres; but my head was still dizzy, and it seemed impossible to sit down to writing at once in these new scenes, so we determined to spend the day in explorations.

From our windows we had a view of the higher part of the town, and generally it looked uninteresting enough; but what is it that light cannot transfigure into beauty? One evening after a shower, as the sun was setting over the sea behind us, some peculiar arrangement of clouds threw a delicious evening light on the irregular cluster of houses, and merged the ugliness of their forms in

an exquisite flood of colour, — as a stupid person is made glorious by a noble deed. A perfect rainbow arched over the picture. From one end of the Capstone we have an admirable bit for a picture. In the background rises old Helesborough, jutting out far into the sea, — rugged and rocky as it fronts the waves, green and accessible landward: in front of this stands Lantern Hill a picturesque mass of green and grey, surmounted by an old bit of building that looks as if it were the habitation of some mollusc that had secreted its shell from the material of the rock; and quite in the foreground, contrasting finely in colour with the rest, are some lower perpendicular rocks of dark-brown tints, patched here and there with vivid green. In hilly districts, where houses and clusters of houses look so tiny against the huge limbs of mother earth, one cannot help thinking of man as a parasitic animal, — an epizoon making his abode in the skin of the planetary organism. In a flat country, a house or a town looks imposing: there is nothing to rival it in height, and we may imagine the earth a mere pedestal for us. But when one sees a house stuck on the side of a great hill, and still more, a number of houses looking like a few barnacles clustered on the side of a great rock, we begin to think of the strong family likeness between ourselves and all other building, burrowing, house-appropriating, and shell-secreting animals. The difference between a man with his house and a mollusc with its shell lies in the number of steps or phenomena interposed between the fact of individual existence and the completion of the building Whatever other advantages we may have over molluscs and insects in our habitations, it is

Ilfracombe, Recollections, May, June, 1865.

clear that their architecture has the advantage of ours in beauty, — at least, considered as the architecture of the species. Look at man in the light of a shell-fish, and it must be admitted that his shell is generally ugly; and it is only after a great many more " steps or phenomena " that he secretes here and there a wonderful shell in the shape of a temple or a palace.

On our first zoophyte hunt it was characteristic of the wide difference there is between having eyes and *seeing*, that in this region of sea-anemones, where the Mesembryanthemum especially is as plenty as blackberries, we climbed about for two hours without seeing *one* anemone, and went in again with scarcely anything but a few stones and weeds to put into our jars. On our next hunt, however, after we had been out some time, G. exclaimed, " I see an anemone! " And we were immensely excited by the discovery of this little red Mesembryanthemum, which we afterwards disdained to gather, as much as if it had been a nettle. It was a *crescendo* of delight when we found a " strawberry," and a *fortissimo* when I for the first time saw the pale fawn-coloured tentacles of an *Anthea cereus* viciously waving like little serpents in a low-tide pool. But not a polype for a long, long while could even G. detect, after all his reading, — so necessary is it for the eye to be educated by objects as well as ideas. Every day I gleaned some little bit of naturalistic experience, either through G.'s calling on me to look through the microscope, or from hunting on the rocks; and this in spite of my preoccupation with my article, which I worked at considerably *à contre-cœur*, despairing of it ever being worth anything. When at last, by the 17th of June, both my articles were

despatched, I felt delightfully at liberty, and determined to pay some attention to seaweeds, which I had never seen in such beauty as at Ilfracombe. For hitherto I had been chiefly on chalky and sandy shores, where there were no rock-pools to show off the lovely colours and forms of the algæ. There are tide-pools to be seen almost at every other step on the shore at Ilfracombe; and I shall never forget their appearance when we first arrived there. The *Corallina officinalis* was then in its greatest perfection, and with its purple-pink fronds threw into relief the dark olive fronds of the Laminariæ on one side and the vivid green of the Ulva and Enteromorpha on the other. After we had been there a few weeks, the Corallina was faded; and I noticed the *Mesogloia vermicularis* and the *M. virescens*, which look very lovely in the water from the white cilia, which make the most delicate fringe to their yellow-brown, whip-like fronds, and some of the common Polysiphoniæ. These tide-pools made me quite in love with seaweeds, so I took up Landsborough's book and tried to get a little more light on their structure and history.

Our zoological expeditions alternated with delicious inland walks. I think the country looked its best when we arrived. It was just that moment in spring when the leaves are in full leaf, but still keep their delicate varieties of colouring, and that *transparency* which belongs only to this season. And the furze was in its golden glory! It was almost like the fading away of the evening red, when the furze blossoms died off from the hills, and the only contrast left was that of the marly soil with the green crops and woods. The primroses were the contemporaries of the furze,

and sprinkled the sides of the hills with their pale stars almost as plentifully as daisies or buttercups elsewhere. But the great charm of all Devonshire lanes is the springs that you detect gurgling in shady recesses, covered with liverwort, with here and there waving tufts of fern and other broad-leaved plants that love obscurity and moisture.

We seemed to make less of our evenings at Ilfracombe than we have ever done elsewhere. We used often to be tired with our hunting or walking; and we were reading books which did not make us take them up very eagerly, — Gosse's "Rambles on the Devonshire Coast," for example; Trench's "Calderon," and other volumes, taken up in a desultory way. One bit of reading we had there, however, which interested me deeply. It was Masson's "Life of Chatterton," which happily linked itself with the impressions I had received from the sight of the old church at Bristol.

Mr. Tugwell's (the curate) acquaintance was a real acquisition to us, not only because he was a companion and helper in zoological pursuits, but because to know him was to know of another sweet nature in the world. It is always good to know, if only in passing, a charming human being; it refreshes one like flowers, and woods, and clear brooks. One Sunday evening we walked up to his pretty house to carry back some proofs of his, and he induced us to go in and have coffee with him. He played on his harmonium, and we chatted pleasantly. The last evening of our stay at Ilfracombe he came to see us in Mrs. Webster's drawing-room, and we had music till nearly eleven o'clock, — a pleasant recollection!

We only twice took the walk beyond Watermouth towards Berrynarbor. The road lies

through what are called the "Meadows," which look like a magnificent park. A stream, fringed with wild flowers and willows, runs along the valley, two or three yards from the side of the road. This stream is clear as crystal, and about every twenty yards it falls over a little artificial precipice of stones. The long grass was waving in all the glory of June, before the mower has come to make it suffer a "love change" from beauties into sweet odours; and the slopes on each side of us were crowned or clothed with fine trees. The last time we went through these meadows was on our last day at Ilfracombe. Such sunlight and such deep peace on the hills and by the stream! Coming back, we rested on a gate under the trees, and a blind man came up to rest also. He told us, in his slow way, what a fine "healthy spot" this was, — yes, a very healthy spot, — a healthy spot. And then we went on our way, and saw his face no more.

I have talked of the Ilfracombe lanes without describing them, for to describe them one ought to know the names of all the lovely wild flowers that cluster on their banks. Almost every yard of these banks is a "Hunt" picture, — a delicious crowding of mosses, and delicate trefoil, and wild strawberries, and ferns great and small. But the crowning beauty of the lanes is the springs that gush out in little recesses by the side of the road, — recesses glossy with liverwort and feathery with fern. Sometimes you have the spring when it has grown into a brook, either rushing down a miniature cataract by the lane-side, or flowing gently as a "braided streamlet" across your path. I never before longed so much to know the names of things as during this visit to Ilfracombe. The desire is

part of the tendency that is now constantly growing in me to escape from all vagueness and inaccuracy into the daylight of distinct vivid ideas. The mere fact of naming an object tends to give definiteness to our conception of it. We have then a sign which at once calls up in our minds the distinctive qualities which mark out for us that particular object from all others.

We ascended the Tors only twice; for a tax of 3*d.* per head was demanded on this luxury, and we could not afford a sixpenny walk very frequently: yet the view is perhaps the very finest to be had at Ilfracombe. Bay behind bay, fringed with foam, and promontory behind promontory, each with its peculiar shades of purple light, — the sweep of the Welsh coast faintly visible in the distance, and the endless expanse of sea flecked with ships stretching on our left.

One evening we went down to the shore through the " Tunnels " to see the sunset. Standing in the " Ladies' Cove," we had before us the sharp fragments of rock jutting out of the waves and standing black against the orange and crimson sky. How lovely to look into that brilliant distance and see the ship on the horizon seeming to sail away from the cold and dim world behind it right into the golden glory! I have always that sort of feeling when I look at sunset: it always seems to me that there in the West lies a land of light and warmth and love.

On the 26th of June we said good-bye to Ilfracombe. The sight of the cockle-women at Swansea, where we had to wait, would make a fine subject for a painter. One of them was the grandest woman I ever saw, — six feet high, carrying herself like a Greek warrior, and treading the earth

with unconscious majesty. Her face was weather-beaten and wizened, but her eyes were bright and piercing, and the lines of her face, with its high cheek-bones, strong and characteristic. The guard at the railway station told us that one of the porters had been insolent the other day to a cockle-woman, and that she immediately pitched him off the platform into the road below!

When we arrived here, I had not even read a great book on which I had engaged to write a long article by the beginning of this month; so that between work and zoology and bodily ailments my time has been full to overflowing. We are enchanted with Ilfracombe. I really think it is the loveliest sea place I ever saw, from the combination of fine rocky coast with exquisite inland scenery. But it would not do for any one who can't climb rocks and mount perpetual hills; for the peculiarity of this country is that it is all hill and no valley. You have no sooner got to the foot of one hill than you begin to mount another. You would laugh to see our room decked with yellow pie-dishes, a *foot pan*, glass jars and phials, all full of zoophytes, or molluscs, or annelids, — and still more, to see the eager interest with which we rush to our "preserves" in the morning to see if there has been any mortality among them in the night. We have made the acquaintance of a charming little zoological curate here, who is a delightful companion on expeditions, and is most good-natured in lending and giving apparatus and "critturs" of all sorts. Mr. Pigott[1] is coming here in his brother's yacht at the end of June, and we hope then to go to

Letter to the Brays, 6th June, 1856, from Ilfracombe.

[1] Mr. Edward Smyth Pigott, who remained to the end of their lives a very close and much valued friend of Mr. Lewes and George Eliot.

Clovelly, — Kingsley's Clovelly, — and perhaps other places on the coast that we can't reach on foot. After this we mean to migrate to Tenby, for the sake of making acquaintance with its molluscs and medusæ.

Letter to Mrs. Peter Taylor, 8th June, 1856.

I received your kind letter only yesterday, but I write a few words in answer at once, lest, as it so often happens, delay should beget delay.

It is never too late to write generous words, and although circumstances are not likely to allow of our acquiring a more intimate knowledge of each other from personal intercourse, it will always be a pleasant thought to me that you have remembered me kindly, and interpreted me nobly. You are one of the minority who know how to "use their imagination in the service of charity."

I have suffered so much from misunderstanding created by letters, even to old friends, that I never write on private personal matters, unless it be a rigorous duty or necessity to do so. Some little phrase or allusion is misinterpreted, and on this false basis a great fabric of misconception is reared, which even explanatory conversations will not remove. Life is too precious to be spent in this weaving and unweaving of false impressions, and it is better to live quietly on under some degree of misrepresentation than to attempt to remove it by the uncertain process of letter-writing.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 29th June, 1856.

Yes, indeed, I do remember old Tenby days, and had set my heart on being in the very same house again; but, alas! it had just been let. It is immensely smartened up, like the place generally, since those old times, and is proportionately less desirable for quiet people who have no flounces and do not subscribe

to new churches. Tenby looks insignificant in picturesqueness after Ilfracombe; but the two objects that drew us hither, zoology and health, will flourish none the worse for the absence of tall precipices and many-tinted rocks. The air is delicious, — soft but not sultry, — and the sands and bathing such as are to be found nowhere else. St. Catherine's Rock with its caverns is our paradise. We go there with baskets, hammers and chisels, and jars and phials, and come home laden with spoils. Altogether we are contented to have been driven away from Ilfracombe by the cold wind, since a new place is new experience, and Mr. Lewes has never been here before. To me there is the additional pleasure — half melancholy — of recalling all the old impressions and comparing them with the new. I understand your wish to have as much of Rosehill as possible this year, and I am so glad that you will associate a visit from Herbert Spencer with this last summer. I suppose he is with you now. If so, give him my very evil regards, and tell him that because he has not written to us we will diligently *not* tell him a great many things he would have liked to know. We have a project of going into St. Catherine's caverns with lanterns, some night when the tide is low, about eleven, for the sake of seeing the zoophytes preparing for their midnight revels. The Actiniæ, like other belles, put on their best faces on such occasions. Two things we have lost by leaving Ilfracombe, for which we have no compensation, — the little zoological curate, Mr. Tugwell, who is really one of the best specimens of the clergyman species I have seen; and the pleasure of having Miss Barbara Smith there for a week sketching the rocks and putting our love of them into the tan-

gible form of a picture. We are looking out now for Mr. Pigott in his brother's yacht; and his amiable face will make an agreeable variety on the sands. I thought "Walden"[1] (you mean "Life in the Woods," don't you?) a charming book, from its freshness and sincerity as well as for its bits of description. It is pleasant to think that Harriet Martineau can make so much of her last days. Her energy and her habit of useful work are admirable.

*During the stay at Ilfracombe and Tenby not much literary work was done, except the articles on Young and on Riehl's book. There was a notice of Masson's Essays and the Belles Lettres section for the July number of the "Westminster," and a review for the "Leader." There is mention, too, of the reading of Beaumarchais' "Memoirs," Milne Edwards's "Zoology," Harvey's sea-side book, and "Coriolanus," and then comes this significant sentence in her Journal: —*

Journal, 1856.

*July* 20, 1856. — The fortnight has slipped away without my being able to show much result from it. I have written a review of the "Lover's Seat," and jotted down some recollections of Ilfracombe: besides these trifles, and the introduction to an article already written, I have done no *visible* work. But I have absorbed many ideas and much bodily strength; indeed I do not remember ever feeling so strong in mind and body as I feel at this moment. On Saturday the 12th Barbara Smith arrived, and stayed here till Wednesday morning. We enjoyed her society very much, but were deeply touched to see that three years had made her so much older and sadder. Her activity for great objects is admirable; and

[1] By Thoreau.

contact with her is a fresh inspiration to work while it is day. We have now taken up Quatrefages again. The " Memoirs " of Beaumarchais yielded me little fruit. Mr. Chapman invites me to contribute to the " Westminster " for this quarter. I am anxious to begin my fiction writing, and so am not inclined to undertake an article that will give me much trouble, but at all events, I will finish my article on Young.

*July* 21. — We had a delightful walk on the north sands, and hunted with success. A sunny, happy day.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 29th July, 1856.

Glad to hear at last some news of your Essay, — hoping to hear more and better by-and-by. I did n't like to think that your labour would be thrown away, except so far as it must do good to yourself by clearing up your ideas. Not that your ideas were muddy, but the last degree of clearness can only come by writing. Mr. Pigott is with us just now, and we are meditating a nocturnal visit to St. Catherine's caves with him. Our visit to Tenby has been very useful zoologically, but we are not otherwise greatly in love with the place. It seems tame and vulgar after Ilfracombe.

Letter to Chas. Bray, 6th Aug. 1856.

Thank you for your kind note,[1] so like yourself. Such things encourage me, and help me to do better. I never think what I write is good for anything till other people tell me so, and even then it always seems to me as if I should never write anything *else* worth reading. Ah, how much good we may do each other by a few friendly words, and the opportunities for them are so much more frequent than for friendly

[1] About the article on Riehl's book, "The Natural History of German Life."

deeds! We want people to feel with us more than to act for us. Mr. Lewes sends his kind regards to you. He too was very pleased with your letter, for he cares more about getting approbation for me than for himself. *He* can do very well without it.

*On the 8th August they left Tenby, and on 9th arrived at Richmond, "with terrible headache, but enjoyed the sense of being 'at home' again." On the 18th, "walked in Kew Park, and talked with G. of my novel. Finished 'César Birotteau' aloud." On the 25th August Mr. Lewes set off for Hofwyl, near Berne, taking his two eldest boys, Charles and Thornton, to place them at school there. He returned on 4th September, and in his absence George Eliot had been busy with her article on "Silly Novels by Lady Novelists." This was finished on the 12th September, and on the 19th she sent off the Belles Lettres section for the October number of the "Westminster."*

*We have now arrived at the period of the new birth, and fortunately, in the following memorandum, we have George Eliot's own words as to how it came about:* —

September, 1856, made a new era in my life, for it was then I began to write fiction. It had always been a vague dream of mine that some time or other I might write a novel; and my shadowy conception of what the novel was to be, varied, of course, from one epoch of my life to another. But I never went further towards the actual writing of the novel than an introductory chapter describing a Staffordshire village and the life of the neighbouring farm-houses; and as the years passed on, I lost any hope that I should ever be able to write a novel, just as I desponded about everything else in my future life. I always thought I was deficient in dramatic power, both of construction and dialogue, but I

**How I came to write fiction.**

felt I should be at my ease in the descriptive parts of a novel. My "introductory chapter" was pure description, though there were good materials in it for dramatic presentation. It happened to be among the papers I had with me in Germany, and one evening at Berlin something led me to read it to George. He was struck with it as a bit of concrete description, and it suggested to him the possibility of my being able to write a novel, though he distrusted — indeed disbelieved in — my possession of any dramatic power. Still, he began to think that I might as well try some time what I could do in fiction; and by-and-by, when we came back to England, and I had greater success than he ever expected in other kinds of writing, his impression that it was worth while to see how far my mental power would go, towards the production of a novel, was strengthened. He began to say very positively, "You must try and write a story," and when we were at Tenby he urged me to begin at once. I deferred it, however, after my usual fashion, with work that does not present itself as an absolute duty. But one morning as I was thinking what should be the subject of my first story, my thoughts merged themselves into a dreamy doze, and I imagined myself writing a story, of which the title was "The Sad Fortunes of the Reverend Amos Barton." I was soon wide awake again, and told G. He said, "Oh, what a capital title!" and from that time I had settled in my mind that this should be my first story. George used to say, "It may be a failure, — it may be that you are unable to write fiction. Or perhaps it may be just good enough to warrant you trying again." Again, "You may write a *chef d'œuvre* at once, — there 's no telling." But his prevalent impression

was that though I could hardly write a *poor* novel, my effort would want the highest quality of fiction, — dramatic presentation. He used to say, "You have wit, description, and philosophy, — those go a good way towards the production of a novel. It is worth while for you to try the experiment."

We determined that if my story turned out good enough, we would send it to Blackwood; but G. thought the more probable result was that I should have to lay it aside and try again.

But when we returned to Richmond, I had to write my article on "Silly Novels," and my review of Contemporary Literature for the "Westminster," so that I did not begin my story till September 22. After I had begun it, as we were walking in the park, I mentioned to G. that I had thought of the plan of writing a series of stories, containing sketches drawn from my own observation of the clergy, and calling them "Scenes from Clerical Life," opening with "Amos Barton." He at once accepted the notion as a good one, — fresh and striking; and about a week afterwards, when I read him the first part of "Amos," he had no longer any doubt about my ability to carry out the plan. The scene at Cross Farm, he said, satisfied him that I had the very element he had been doubtful about, — it was clear I could write good dialogue. There still remained the question whether I could command any pathos; and that was to be decided by the mode in which I treated Milly's death. One night G. went to town on purpose to leave me a quiet evening for writing it. I wrote the chapter from the news brought by the shepherd to Mrs. Hackit, to the moment when Amos is dragged from the bedside, and I read it to G. when

he came home. We both cried over it, and then he came up to me and kissed me, saying, "I think your pathos is better than your fun."

*The story of the "Sad Fortunes of Amos Barton" was begun on 22d September and finished on the 5th November, and I subjoin the opening correspondence between Mr. Lewes and Mr. John Blackwood, to exhibit the first effect it produced: —*

Letter from G. H. Lewes to John Blackwood, 6th Nov. 1856.

*"I trouble you with a MS. of 'Sketches of Clerical Life,' which was submitted to me by a friend who desired my good offices with you. It goes by this post. I confess that before reading the MS. I had considerable doubts of my friend's powers as a writer of fiction; but after reading it, these doubts were changed into very high admiration. I don't know what you will think of the story, but according to my judgment, such humour, pathos, vivid presentation, and nice observation, have not been exhibited (in this style) since the 'Vicar of Wakefield'; and in consequence of that opinion, I feel quite pleased in negotiating the matter with you.*

*"This is what I am commissioned to say to you about the proposed series. It will consist of tales and sketches illustrative of the actual life of our country clergy about a quarter of a century ago, — but solely in its* human, *and not at all in its* theological *aspects; the object being to do what has never yet been done in our literature, for we have had abundant religious stories, polemical and doctrinal, but since the 'Vicar' and Miss Austen, no stories representing the clergy like every other class, with the humours, sorrows, and troubles of other men. He begged me particularly to add that — as the specimen sent will sufficiently prove — the tone throughout will be sympathetic, and not at all antagonistic.*

*"Some of these, if not all, you may think suitable for 'Maga.' If any are sent of which you do not approve, or which you do not think sufficiently interesting, these he will reserve for the separate republication, and for*

*this purpose he wishes to retain the copyright. Should you only print one or two, he will be well satisfied; and still better if you should think well enough of the series to undertake the separate republication."*

Letter from John Blackwood to G. H. Lewes, 12th Nov. 1856.

*" I am happy to say that I think your friend's reminiscences of Clerical Life will do. If there is any more of the series written I should like to see it, as, until I saw more, I could not make any decided proposition for the publication of the Tales, in whole or in part, in the ' Magazine.' This first specimen, 'Amos Barton,' is unquestionably very pleasant reading. Perhaps the author falls into the error of trying too much to explain the characters of his actors by description instead of allowing them to evolve in the action of the story; but the descriptions are very humorous and good. The death of Milly is powerfully done, and affected me much. I am not sure whether he does not spoil it a little by specifying so minutely the different children and their names. The wind-up is perhaps the lamest part of the story; and there, too, I think the defect is caused by the specifications as to the fortunes of parties of whom the reader has no previous knowledge, and cannot, consequently, feel much interest. At first I was afraid that in the amusing reminiscences of childhood in church there was a want of some softening touch, such as the remembrance of a father or mother lends, in after years, to what was at the time a considerable penance.*

*" I hate anything of a sneer at real religious feeling as cordially as I despise anything like cant, and I should think this author is of the same way of thinking, although his clergymen, with one exception, are not very attractive specimens of the body. The revulsion of feeling towards poor Amos is capitally drawn, although the asinine stupidity of his conduct about the Countess had disposed one to kick him.*

*" I daresay I shall have a more decided opinion as to the merits of the story when I have looked at it again and thought over it; but in the meantime I am sure that there is a happy turn of expression throughout, also much*

*humour and pathos. If the author is a new writer, I beg to congratulate him on being worthy of the honours of print and pay. I shall be very glad to hear from you or him soon."*

Letter from G. H. Lewes to John Blackwood, Saturday, Nov. 1856.

*"I have communicated your letter to my clerical friend, who, though somewhat discouraged by it, has taken my advice, and will submit the second story to you when it is written. At present he has only written what he sent you. His avocations, he informs me, will prevent his setting to work for the next three weeks or so, but as soon as he is at liberty he will begin.*

*" I rate the story much higher than you appear to do, from certain expressions in your note, though you too appreciate the humour and pathos and the happy turn of expression. It struck me as being fresher than any story I have read for a long while, and as exhibiting, in a high degree, that faculty which I find to be the rarest of all, — viz., the dramatic ventriloquism.*

*" At the same time I told him that I thoroughly understood your editorial caution in not accepting from an unknown hand a series on the strength of one specimen."*

Letter from John Blackwood to G. H. Lewes, 18th Nov. 1856.

*" I was very far from intending that my letter should convey anything like disappointment to your friend. On the contrary, I thought the tale very good, and intended to convey as much. But I daresay I expressed myself coolly enough. Criticism would assume a much soberer tone were critics compelled* seriously to act *whenever they expressed an opinion. Although not much given to hesitate about anything, I always think twice before I put the decisive mark 'In type for the Magazine' on any MS. from a stranger. Fancy the intense annoyance (to say nothing of more serious considerations) of publishing, month after month, a series about which the conviction gradually forces itself on you that you have made a total blunder.*

*" I am sorry that the author has no more written, but if he cares much about a speedy appearance, I have so high an opinion of this first tale that I will waive my*

*objections, and publish it without seeing more, — not, of course, committing myself to go on with the other tales of the series unless I approved of them. I am very sanguine that I will approve, as, in addition to the other merits of 'Amos,' I agree with you that there is great freshness of style. If you think also that it would stimulate the author to go on with the other tales with more spirit, I will publish 'Amos' at once. He could divide into two parts. I am blocked up for December, but I could start him in January.*

*"I am glad to hear that your friend is, as I supposed, a clergyman. Such a subject is best in clerical hands, and some of the pleasantest and least prejudiced correspondents I have ever had are English clergymen.*

*"I have not read 'Amos Barton' a second time, but the impression on my mind of the whole character, incidents, and feeling of the story is very distinct, which is an excellent sign."*

*"Your letter has greatly restored the shaken confidence of my friend, who is unusually sensitive, and, unlike most writers, is more anxious about* excellence *than about appearing in print, — as his waiting so long before taking the venture proves. He is consequently afraid of failure, though not afraid of obscurity; and by failure he would understand that which I suspect most writers would be apt to consider as success, — so high is his ambition.*

Letter from G. H. Lewes, to John Blackwood, Saturday, Nov. 1856.

*"I tell you this that you may understand the sort of shy, shrinking, ambitious nature you have to deal with. I tried to persuade him that you really* did *appreciate his story, but were only hesitating about committing yourself to a series; and your last letter has proved me to have been right, — although, as he never contemplated binding you to the publication of any portion of the series to which you might object, he could not at first see your position in its true light.*

*"All is, however, clear now. He will be gratified if you publish 'Amos Barton' in January, as it will give him ample time to get the second story ready, so as to*

*appear when 'Barton' is finished, should you wish it. He is anxious, however, that you should publish the general title of 'Scenes of Clerical Life'; and I think you may do this with perfect safety, since it is quite clear that the writer of 'Amos Barton' is capable of writing at least one more story suitable to 'Maga,' and two would suffice to justify the general title.*

*"Let me not forget to add that when I referred to 'my clerical friend,' I meant to designate the writer of the clerical stories, — not that he was a clericus. I am not at liberty to remove the veil of anonymity, even as regards social position. Be pleased, therefore, to keep the whole secret, and not even mention* my *negotiation, or in any way lead guessers (should any one trouble himself with such a guess, —* not *very likely) to jump from me to my friend."*

*On Christmas Day, 1856, "Mr. Gilfil's Love Story" was begun, and during December and January the following are mentioned among the books read: "The Ajax of Sophocles," Miss Martineau's "History of the Peace," Macaulay's "History" finished, Carlyle's "French Revolution," Burke's "Reflections on the French Revolution," and "Mansfield Park."*

**Letter from John Blackwood to the author of "Amos Barton" 29th Dec. 1856.**

*"Along with this I send a copy of the January number of the Magazine, in which you will find the first part of 'Amos Barton.' It gives me very great pleasure to begin the number with 'Amos,' and I put him in that position because his merits will entitle him to it, and also because it is a vital point to attract public attention to the* first *part of a series, to which end being the first article of the first number of the year may contribute.*

*"I have already expressed to our friend Mr. Lewes the very high opinion I entertain of 'Amos,' and the expectations I have formed of the series, should his successors prove equal to him, which I fully anticipate.*

*"It is a long time since I have read anything so fresh, so humorous, and so touching. The style is capital, conveying so much in so few words.*

*"Those who have seen the tale here are chiefly members of my own family, and they are all enthusiastic in praise.*

*"You may recollect that I expressed a fear that in the affecting and highly wrought scene of poor Milly's death, the attempt to individualise the children by reiterating their names weakened the effect, as the reader had not been prepared to care for them individually, but simply as a group, — the children of Milly and the sorrow-stricken curate. My brother says, 'No. Do not advise the author to touch anything so exquisite.' Of course you are the best judge.*

*"I now send proof of the conclusion of 'Amos,' in acknowledgment of which, and of the first part, I have the pleasure of enclosing a cheque for £52 10s., — fifty guineas.*

*"If the series goes on as I anticipate, there is every prospect that a republication as a separate book at some time or other will be advisable. We would look upon such republication as a joint property, and would either give you a sum for your interest in it, or publish on the terms of one half of the clear profits, to be divided between author and publisher, as might be most agreeable to you.*

*"I shall be very glad to hear from you, either direct or through Mr. Lewes; and any intelligence that the successors of 'Amos' are taking form and substance will be very acceptable.*

*"I shall let you know what the other contributors and the public think of 'Amos' as far as I can gather a verdict, but in the meantime I may congratulate you on having achieved a preliminary success at all events."*

**Letter from the author of "Amos Barton" to John Blackwood, Jan. 1857.**

Your letter has proved to me that the generous Editor and publisher, — generous both in word and in deed, — who makes the author's path smooth and easy, is something more than a pleasant tradition. I am very sensitive to the merits of cheques for fifty guineas, but I am still more sensitive to that cordial appreciation which is a guarantee to me that my work was worth doing for its own sake.

If the "Scenes of Clerical Life" should be republished, I have no doubt we shall find it easy to arrange the terms. In the meantime the most pressing business is to make them worth republishing.

I think the particularisation of the children in the deathbed scene has an important effect on the imagination. But I have removed all names from the "conclusion" except those of Patty and Dickey, in whom, I hope, the reader has a personal interest.

I hope to send you the second story by the beginning of February. It will lie, for the most part, among quite different scenes and persons from the last, — opening in Shepperton once more, but presently moving away to a distant spot and new people, whom, I hope, you will not like less than "Amos" and his friends. But if any one of the succeeding stories should seem to you unsuitable to the pages of "Maga," it can be reserved for publication in the future volume, without creating any difficulty.

Thank you very warmly for the hearty acceptance you have given to my first story.

The first part of "Amos Barton" appeared in the January number of "Blackwood." Before the appearance of the "Magazine," on sending me the proof, Mr. John Blackwood already expressed himself with much greater warmth of admiration; and when the first part had appeared, he sent me a charming letter with a cheque for fifty guineas, and a proposal about republication of the series. When the story was concluded, he wrote me word how Albert Smith had sent him a letter saying he had never read anything that affected him more than Milly's death,

Journal, 1857.

and, added Blackwood, " The men at the club seem to have mingled their tears and their tumblers together. It will be curious if you should be a member and be hearing your own praises." There was clearly no suspicion that I was a woman. It is interesting as an indication of the value there is in such conjectural criticism generally, to remember that when G. read the first part of " Amos " to a party at Helps's, they were all sure I was a clergyman, — a Cambridge man. Blackwood seemed curious about the author, and when I signed my letter " George Eliot," hunted up some old letters from Eliot Warburton's brother to compare the handwritings, though, he said, " ' Amos ' seems to me not in the least like what that good artilleryman would write."

Thank you for fulfilling your promise to let me know something of the criticisms passed on my story. I have a very moderate respect for " opinions of the press," but the private opinions of intelligent people may be valuable to me.

Letter to John Blackwood, 4th Feb. 1857.

In reference to artistic presentation, much adverse opinion will, of course, arise from a dislike to the *order* of art rather than from a critical estimate of the execution. Any one who detests the Dutch school in general will hardly appreciate fairly the merits of a particular Dutch painting. And against this sort of condemnation one must steel one's self as one best can. But objections which point out to me any vice of manner, or any failure in producing an intended effect, will be really profitable. For example, I suppose my scientific illustrations must be a fault, since they seem to have obtruded themselves disagreeably on one of my readers. But if it be a sin to be at once a man

of science and a writer of fiction, I can declare my perfect innocence on that head, my scientific knowledge being as superficial as that of the most "practised writers." I hope to send you a second story in a few days, but I am rather behindhand this time, having been prevented from setting to work for some weeks by other business.

Whatever may be the success of my stories, I shall be resolute in preserving my *incognito*, — having observed that a *nom de plume* secures all the advantages without the disagreeables of reputation. Perhaps, therefore, it will be well to give you my prospective name, as a tub to throw to the whale in case of curious inquiries; and accordingly I subscribe myself, best and most sympathising of Editors, yours very truly,

GEORGE ELIOT.

*I may mention here that my wife told me the reason she fixed on this name was that George was Mr. Lewes's Christian name, and Eliot was a good mouth-filling, easily pronounced word.*

Letter to John Blackwood, 18th Feb. 1857.

First let me thank you very heartily for your letter of the 10th. Except your own very cordial appreciation which is so much beyond a mere official acceptance, that little fact about Albert Smith has gratified me more than anything else in connection with the effect of "Amos." If you should happen to hear an opinion from Thackeray, good or bad, I should like to know it.

You will see that I have availed myself of your suggestions on points of language. I quite recognise the justice of your criticisms on the French phrases. They are not in keeping with my story.

But I am unable to alter anything in relation to

the delineation or development of character, as my stories always grow out of my psychological conception of the *dramatis personæ*. For example, the behaviour of Caterina in the gallery is essential to my conception of her nature, and to the development of that nature in the plot. My artistic bent is directed not at all to the presentation of eminently irreproachable characters, but to the presentation of mixed human beings in such a way as to call forth tolerant judgment, pity, and sympathy. And I cannot stir a step aside from what I *feel* to be *true* in character. If anything strikes you as untrue to human nature in my delineations, I shall be very glad if you will point it out to me, that I may reconsider the matter. But, alas! inconsistencies and weaknesses are not untrue. I hope that your doubts about the plot will be removed by the further development of the story. Meanwhile, warmest thanks for your encouraging letters.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 24th Feb. 1857.

I am the more inclined to think that I shall admire your book, because you are suspected of having given undue preponderance to the Christian argument; for I have a growing conviction that we may measure true moral and intellectual culture by the comprehension and veneration given to all forms of thought and feeling which have influenced large masses of mankind, — and of all intolerance the intolerance calling itself philosophical is the most odious to me.

Letter to John Blackwood, 1st March, 1857.

Thank you for the copy of "Maga" and for the accompanying cheque. One has not many correspondents whose handwriting has such agreeable associations as yours.

I was particularly pleased with that extract you were so good as to send me from Mr.

Swayne's letter. Dear old "Goldie" is one of my earliest and warmest admirations, and I don't desire a better fate than to lie side by side with him in people's memories.

*The Rev. Mr. Swayne had written to Blackwood saying that "Amos," in its charming tenderness, reminded him of the "Vicar of Wakefield." Blackwood had written much delighted with the two first parts of "Mr. Gilfil's Love Story," which were sent to him together.*

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 2d March, 1857.

I began, oddly enough you will perhaps think, by reading through the "Answers of Infidelity,"[1] those being the most interesting parts of the book to me. Some of your own passages I think very admirable,—some of them made me cry, which is always a sign of the highest pleasure writing can give me. But in many of the extracts, I think, Infidelity cuts a very poor figure. Some are feeble, some *bad*, and terribly discrepant in the tone of their thought and feeling from the passages which come fresh from your own mind. The disadvantage arising from the perpetual shifting of the point of view is a disadvantage, I suppose, inseparable from the plan, which I cannot admire or feel to be effective, though I can imagine it may be a serviceable form of presentation to some inquirers. The *execution* I do admire. I think it shows very high and rare qualities of mind, — a self-discipline and largeness of thought, which are the highest result of culture. The "Objections of Christianity," which I have also read, are excellently put, and have an immense advantage over the "Answers of Infidelity" in their greater homogeneity. The first part

[1] Baillie Prize Essay on Christianity and Infidelity: an Exposition of the Arguments on both Sides. By Miss Sara Hennell.

I have only begun and glanced through, and at present have no other observation to make than that I think you might have brought a little more artillery to bear on Christian morality. But nothing is easier than to find fault, — nothing so difficult as to *do* some real work.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 5th March, 1857.

I think I wrote very brusquely and disagreeably to you the other day, but the impertinence was altogether in the form and not at all in the feeling. I always have uncomfortable sensations after writing objections and criticisms when they relate to things I substantially admire. It is inflicting a hurt on my own veneration.

I showed the passage on the eye, p. 157, to Herbert Spencer, and he agrees with us that you have not stated your idea so as to render it a logical argument against design. You appear to imply that development and gradation in organs and functions are opposed to that conception, which they are not. I suppose you are aware that we all three hold the conception of creative design to be untenable. We only think you have not made out a good case against it.

Thank you for sending me some news of Harriet Martineau. I have often said lately "I wonder how she is."

Letter to John Blackwood, 14th March, 1857.

I am glad you retain a doubt in favour of the *dagger*, and wish I could convert you to entire approval, for I am much more satisfied when your feeling is thoroughly with me. But it would be the death of my story to substitute a dream for the real scene. Dreams usually play an important part in fiction, but rarely, I think, in actual life.

So many of us have reason to know that criminal impulses may be felt by a nature which is nevertheless guarded by its entire constitution from the commission of crime, that I can't help hoping that my Caterina will not forfeit the sympathy of all my readers.

The answer you propose to give to curious inquirers is the best possible. For several reasons I am very anxious to retain my *incognito* for some time to come, and to an author not already famous, anonymity is the highest *prestige*. Besides, if George Eliot turns out a dull dog and an ineffective writer, — a mere flash in the pan, — I, for one, am determined to cut him on the first intimation of that disagreeable fact.

The fates have willed that this shall be a very melancholy story, and I am longing to be a little merrier again.

*On the 16th March, Mr. Lewes and George Eliot started for Plymouth, Penzance, and the Scilly Isles, and we have the following recollections of their stay there: —*

Recollections, Scilly Isles, March-May, 1857.

I had never before seen a granite coast, and on the southern side of the island of St. Mary's one sees such a coast in its most striking and characteristic forms. Rectangular crevices, the edges of which have been rounded by weather, give many of the granite masses a resemblance to bales of wool or cotton heaped on each other; another characteristic form is the mushroom-shaped mass, often lying poised on the summits of more cubical boulders or fragments; another is the immense flat platform stretching out like a pier into the sea; another the oval basins formed by the action of the rain-

water on the summits of the rocks and boulders. The colouring of the rocks was very various and beautiful: sometimes a delicate greyish-green from the shaggy byssus which clothes it, chiefly high up from the water; then a light warm brown; then black; occasionally of a rich yellow; and here and there purplish. Below the rocks, on the coast, are almost everywhere heaps of white boulders, sometimes remarkably perfect ovals, and looking like huge eggs of some monstrous bird. Hardly any weed was to be seen on the granite, except here and there in a rock-pool, green with young ulva; and no barnacles incrust the rock, no black mussels, scarcely any limpets. The waves that beat on this coast are clear as crystal, and we used to delight in watching them rear themselves like the horses of a mighty sea-god as they approached the rocks on which they were broken into eddies of milky foam. Along a great part of this southern coast there stretch heathy or furzy downs, over which I used to enjoy rambling immensely, — there is a sense of freedom in those unenclosed grounds that one never has in a railed park, however extensive. Then, on the north side of the island, above Sandy Bar, what a view we used to get of the opposite islands and reefs, with their delicious violet and yellow tints, — the tall ship or two anchored in the Sound, changing their aspect like living things, and when the wind was at all high the white foam prancing round the reefs and rising in fountain-like curves above the screen of rocks!

Many a wet and dirty walk we had along the lanes, for the weather was often wet and almost always blustering. Now and then, however, we had a clear sky and a calm sea, and on such days

it was delicious to look up after the larks that were soaring above us, or to look out on the island- and reef-studded sea. I never enjoyed the lark before as I enjoyed it at Scilly, — never felt the full beauty of Shelley's poem on it before. A spot we became very fond of toward the close of our stay was Carne Lea, where, between two fine jutting piles of granite, there was a soft down, gay with the pretty pink flowers of the thrift, which, in this island, carpets the ground like green-sward. Here we used to sit and lie in the bright afternoons, watching the silver sunlight on the waves, — bright silver, not golden, — it is the morning and evening sunlight that is golden. A week or two after our arrival we made the acquaintance of Mr. Moyle, the surgeon, who became a delightful friend to us, always ready to help with the contents of his surgery or anything else at his command. We liked to have him come and smoke a cigar in the evening, and look in now and then for a little lesson in microscopy. The little indications of the social life at Scilly that we were able to pick up were very amusing. I was repeatedly told, in order to make me aware who Mr. Hall was, that he married a Miss Lemon. The people at St. Mary's imagine that the lawyers and doctors at Penzance are a sort of European characters that every one knows. We heard a great deal about Mr. Quill, an Irishman, the Controller of the Customs; and one day, when we were making a call on one of the residents, our host said two or three times at intervals, " I wish you knew Quill! " At last, on our farewell call, we saw the distinguished Quill, with his hair plaistered down, his charming smile, and his trousers with a broad stripe down each leg. Our host

amused us by his contempt for curs: "Oh, I would n't have a cur, — there 's nothing to look at in a cur!" [1]

The smallest details written in the hastiest way that will enable me to imagine you as you are, are just what I want, — indeed, all I care about in correspondence. We are more and more in love with these little islands. There is not a tree to be seen, but there are grand granite hills on the coast such as I never saw before, and furze-covered hills with larks soaring and singing above them, and zoological wonders on the shore to fill our bottles and our souls at once. For some time I have been unusually weak and knock-upable. Our landlady is an excellent woman, but like almost all peculiarly domestic women, has not more than rudimentary ideas of cooking; and in an island where you can get nothing but beef, except by sending to Penzance, that supreme science has its maximum value. She seems to think eating a purely arbitrary procedure, — an abnormal function of mad people who come to Scilly; and if we ask her what the people live on here, is quite at a loss to tell us, apparently thinking the question relates to the abstruser portion of natural history. But I insist, and give her a culinary lecture every morning, and we do in the end get fed. Altogether our life here is so far better than the golden age, that we work as well as play. That is the happy side of things. But there is a very sad one to me which I shall not dwell upon, — only tell you of. More than a week ago I received the news that poor Chrissey had lost one of her pretty little girls of fever; that the other little one — they were the only two she had

Letter to Mrs. Bray, 5th April, 1857.

[1] "Mill on the Floss" chap. iii., Book IV. Bob Jakin.

at home with her — was also dangerously ill, and Chrissey herself and her servant apparently attacked by typhus too. The thought of her in this state is a perpetual shadow to me in the sunshine.

I shudder at entering on such great subjects (as "Design") in letters; — my idle brain wants lashing to work like a negro, and will do nothing under a slighter stimulus. We are enjoying a retrogression to old-fashioned reading. I rush on the slightest pretext to Sophocles, and am as excited about blind old Œdipus as any young lady can be about the latest hero with magnificent eyes. But there is *one* new book we have been enjoying, and so, I hope, have you, — the "Life of Charlotte Brontë." Deeply affecting throughout: in the early part romantic, poetic as one of her own novels; in the later years tragic, — especially to those who know what sickness is. Mrs. Gaskell has done her work admirably, both in the industry and care with which she has gathered and selected her material, and in the feeling with which she has presented it. There is one exception, however, which I regret very much. She sets down Branwell's conduct entirely to remorse. Remorse may make sad work with a man; but it will not make such a life as Branwell's was in the last three or four years, unless the germs of vice had sprouted and shot up long before, as it seems clear they had in him. What a tragedy! — that picture of the old father and the three sisters trembling, day and night, in terror at the possible deeds of their drunken, brutal son and brother! That is the part of the life which affects me most.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 16th April, 1857.

I have been looking anxiously for some further

tidings of Chrissey since your last letter, which told me that she and Kate were better, though not out of danger. I try to hope that no news is good news, but if you do not think it troublesome to write, I shall be thankful to have that hope changed into certainty.

Letter to Isaac P. Evans, 16th April, 1857.

Meanwhile, to save multiplying letters, — which I know you are not fond of, — I mention now what will take no harm from being mentioned rather prematurely. I should like Chrissey to have £15 of my next half-year's income, due at the beginning of June, to spend in taking a change of air as soon as she is able to do so; and perhaps if it were desirable for her to leave before the money has been paid in, you would be so kind as to advance it for a few weeks. I am writing, of course, in ignorance of her actual state; but I should think it must be good for her, as soon as she is able to move, to leave that fever-infected place for a time, and I know the money must have gone very fast in recent expenses. I only suggest the change of air as the thing that I should think best for Chrissey; but in any case I should like her to have the money to do what she pleases with it. If she is well enough, please to give her the enclosed note, in which I have suggested to her what I have just written to you.

I am much obliged to you for your last letter, and shall be still more so if you will write me word of Chrissey's present condition.

Thank you for the pleasant notes of impressions concerning my story sent to me through Lewes.

Letter to John Blackwood, 1st May, 1857.

I will pay attention to your caution about the danger of huddling up my stories. Con-

clusions are the weak point of most authors, but some of the fault lies in the very nature of a conclusion which is at best a negation.

There must be something wrong in the winding up of "Amos," for I have heard of two persons who are disappointed with the conclusion. But the story never presented itself to me as possible to be protracted after Milly's death. The drama ends there.

I am thinking of writing a short epilogue to "Mr. Gilfil's Love-Story," and I will send it you with the proof from Jersey, where, on a strict promise that I am not to be dissected, I shall shortly join our friend Lewes.

The third story will be very different from either of the preceding, which will perhaps be an advantage, as poor Tina's sad tale was necessarily rather monotonous in its effects.

*The Epilogue to "Mr. Gilfil" was written sitting on the Fortification Hill, Scilly Isles, one sunshiny morning.*

It was a beautiful moment (12th May) when we came to our lodgings at Gorey. The orchards were all in blossom, — and this is an island of orchards. They cover the slopes; they stretch before you in shady, grassy, indefinite extent through every other gateway by the roadside; they flourish in some spots almost close to the sea. What a contrast to the Scilly Isles! There you stand on the hills like a sparrow on the housetop; here you are like the same sparrow when he is hopping about on the branches with green above him, green below, and green all round. Gorey stands in Granville Bay, where the grand old castle of Mont Orgueil stands and keeps guard on a fine rocky promontory overlooking the

Jersey, Recollections, 1857.

little harbour dotted with fishing craft. There is a charming piece of common, or down, where you can have the quietest, easiest walking, with a carpet of minute wild flowers that are not hindered from flourishing by the sandy rain of the coast. I delighted extremely in the brownish-green softness of this undulating common, here and there varied with a patch of bright green fern, — all the prettier for two little homesteads set down upon it, with their garden-fence and sheltering trees. It was pretty in all lights, but especially the evening light, to look round at the castle and harbour, the village and the scattered dwellings peeping out from among trees on the hill. The castle is built of stone which has a beautiful pinkish-grey tint, and the bright green ivy hangs oblique curtains on its turreted walls, making it look like a natural continuation or outgrowth of the rocky and grassy height on which it stands. Then the eye wanders on to the right and takes in the church standing halfway down the hill, which is clothed with a plantation, and shelters the little village with its cloud of blue smoke: still to the right and the village breaks off, leaving nothing but meadows in front of the slope that shuts out the setting sun, and only lets you see a hint of the golden glory that is reflected in the pink eastern clouds.

The first lovely walk we found inland was the Queen's Fern Valley, where a broad strip of meadow and pasture lies between two high slopes covered with woods and ferny wilderness. When we first saw this valley, it was in the loveliest springtime: the woods were a delicious mixture of red and tender green and purple. We have watched it losing that spring beauty and passing into the green and flowery luxuriance of June,

and now into the more monotonous summer tint of July.

When the blossoms fell away from the orchards, my next delight was to look at the grasses mingled with the red sorrel; then came the white umbelliferous plants, making a border or inner frame for them along the hedgerows and streams. Another pretty thing here is the luxuriance of the yellow iris that covers large pieces of moist ground with its broad blades. Everywhere there are tethered cows, looking at you with meek faces, — mild-eyed, sleek, fawn-coloured creatures, with delicate downy udders.

Another favourite walk of ours was round by Mont Orgueil along the coast. Here we had the green or rocky slope on one side of us, and on the other the calm sea stretching to the coast of France, visible on all but the murkiest days. But the murky days were not many during our stay, and our evening walks round the coast usually showed us a peaceful, scarcely rippled sea, plashing gently on the purple pebbles of the little scalloped bays. There were two such bays within the boundary of our sea-side walk in that direction, and one of them was a perpetual wonder to us, in the luxuriant verdure of meadows and orchards and forest-trees that sloped down to the very shore. No distressed look about the trees, as if they were ever driven harshly back by the winter winds: it was like an inland slope suddenly carried to the coast.

As for the inland walks, they are inexhaustible. The island is one labyrinth of delicious roads and lanes, leading you by the most charming nooks of houses with shady grounds and shrubberies, — delightful farm homesteads, — and trim villas.

It was a sweet, peaceful life we led here. Good creatures, the Amys, our host and hostess, with their nice boy and girl, and the little white kid, — the family pet. No disagreeable sounds to be heard in the house, no unpleasant qualities to hinder one from feeling perfect love to these simple people. We have had long rambles and long readings. But our choice of literature has been rather circumscribed in this out-of-the-way place. The "Life of George Stephenson" has been a real profit and pleasure. I have read Draper's "Physiology" aloud for grave evening hours, and such books as Currer Bell's "Professor," Mlle. d'Auny's "Mariage en Province," and Miss Ferrier's "Marriage," for lighter food. The last, however, we found ourselves unable to finish, notwithstanding Miss Ferrier's high reputation. I have been getting a smattering of botany from Miss Catlow and from Dr. Thomson's little book on wild flowers, which have created at least a longing for something more complete on the subject.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 22d May, 1857.

Such hedgerows in this island! Such orchards white against the green slopes and shady walks, by the woodside with distracting wild flowers. We enjoy the greenery and variety of this bushy island all the better for our stay on bare Scilly, which we had gone to and fro upon till we knew it by heart. Our little lodgings are very snug, — only 13*s.* a week, — a nice little sitting-room, with a workroom adjoining for Mr. Lewes, who is at this moment in all the bliss of having discovered a parasitic worm in a cuttlefish. We dine at five, and our afternoons are almost exhausted in rambling. I hope to get up my strength in this delicious quiet, and have fewer interruptions to work

from headache than I have been having since Christmas. I wonder if I should have had the happiness of seeing Cara if I had been at Richmond now. I would rather see her than any one else in the world — except poor Chrissey. Tell me when you have read the life of Currer Bell. Some people think its revelations in bad taste, — making money out of the dead, wounding the feelings of the living, &c. What book is there that some people or other will not find abominable? We thought it admirable, cried over it, and felt the better for it. We read Cromwell's letters again at Scilly with great delight.

*In May Mr. Lewes writes to Mr. John Blackwood: "We were both amused with the divination of the Manx seer and his friend Liggers." This is the first mention of the individual, whose real name was Liggins of Nuneaton, who afterwards became notorious for laying claim to the authorship of the "Scenes of Clerical Life" and "Adam Bede."*

*"Janet's Repentance" had been begun on the 18th April, and the first three parts were finished in Jersey. In reference to the "Scenes of Clerical Life" there are the following entries in the Journal: —*

*May* 2. — Received letter from Blackwood expressing his approbation of Part IX. of "Mr. Gilfil's Love-Story." He writes very pleasantly, says the series is attributed by many to Bulwer, and that Thackeray thinks highly of it. This was a pleasant fillip to me, who am just now ready to be dispirited on the slightest pretext. Journal, 1857.

*May* 21. — The other day we had a pleasant letter from Herbert Spencer, saying that he had heard "Mr. Gilfil's Love-Story" discussed by Baynes and Dallas, as well as previously by

Pigott, all expressing warm approval and curiosity as to the author.

*May* 26. — Received a pleasant letter from Blackwood, enclosing one from Archer Gurney to the author of "Mr. Gilfil's Love-Story."

*I subjoin this letter, as it is the first she received in her character of a creative author, and it still bears a pencil memorandum in her writing: "This letter he brought up to me at Jersey after reading it, saying with intense joy, 'Her fame is beginning.'"*

"BUCKINGHAM [BUCKS],
*Thursday, 14th May*, 1857.

Letter from Rev. Archer Gurney to the author of "Mr. Gilfil's Love-Story," 14th May, 1857.

"SIR, — *Will you consider it impertinent in a brother author and old reviewer to address a few lines of earnest sympathy and admiration to you, excited by the purity of your style, originality of your thoughts, and absence of all vulgar seeking for effect in those 'Scenes of Clerical Life' now appearing in 'Blackwood'? If I mistake not much, your muse of invention is no hackneyed one, and your style is too peculiar to allow of your being confounded with any of the already well-known writers of the day. Your great and characteristic charm is, to my mind, Nature. You frequently, indeed, express what I may call brilliant ideas, but they always seem to come unsought for, never, as in Lytton, for instance, to be elaborated and placed in the most advantageous light. I allude to such brief aphoristic sayings as 'Animals are such agreeable friends, they ask no questions, they pass no criticisms,' — 'All with that brisk and cheerful air which a sermon is often observed to produce when it is quite finished.' By the by, I am one of the cloth, and might take exception to certain hints, perhaps, but these are dubious. What I see plainly I admire honestly, and trust that more good remains behind. Will you always remain equally natural? That is the doubt. Will the fear of the critic or the public, or the literary world,*

*which spoils almost every one, never master you? Will you always write to please yourself, and preserve the true independence which seems to mark a real supremacy of intellect? But these questions are, I fear, impertinent. I will conclude. Pardon this word of greeting from one whom you may never see or know, and believe me, your earnest admirer,*

"ARCHER GURNEY.

"The Author of
'Mr. Gilfil's Love-Story.'"

*June.* — Blackwood writes from London that he hears nothing but approval of "Mr. Gilfil's Love-Story." Lord Stanley, among other people, had spoken to him about the "Clerical Scenes" at Bulwer's, and was astonished to find Blackwood in the dark as to the author.

Journal, 1857.

I send you by the same post with this the first part of my third story, which I hope will not disappoint you. The part is, I think, rather longer than my parts have usually been, but it would have been injurious to the effect of the story to pause earlier.

Letter to John Blackwood, 2d June, 1857.

Pleasant letters like yours are the best possible stimulus to an author's powers, and if I don't write better and better, the fault will certainly not lie in my editor, who seems to have been created in pre-established harmony with the organisation of a susceptible contributor.

This island, too, with its grassy valleys and pretty indented coast, is not at all a bad haunt for the Muses, if, as one may suppose, they have dropped their too scanty classical attire, and appear in long dresses and brown hats, like decent Christian women likely to inspire "Clerical Scenes."

Moreover, having myself a slight zoological

weakness, I am less alarmed than most people at the society of a zoological maniac. So that, altogether, your contributor is in promising circumstances, and if he doesn't behave like an animal in good condition, is clearly unworthy of his keep.

I am much gratified to have made the conquest of Professor Aytoun; but with a parent's love for the depreciated child, I can't help standing up for "Amos" as better than "Gilfil."

Lewes seems to have higher expectations from the third story than from either of the preceding, but I can form no judgment myself until I have quite finished a thing, and see it aloof from my actual self. I can only go on writing what I feel, and waiting for the proof that I have been able to make others feel.

Letter to Mrs. Bray, 5th June, 1857.

Richmond is *not* fascinating in "the season" or through the summer. It is hot, noisy, and haunted with Cockneys; but at other times we love the Park with an increasing love, and we have such a kind, good landlady there, that it always seems like going home when we return to Park Shot. She writes to us: "I hope you will make your fortune — but you must always live with me," which, considering that she gets less out of us than other lodgers, is a proof of affection in a landlady. Yes! we like our wandering life at present, and it is fructifying, and brings us material in many ways; but we keep in perspective the idea of a cottage among green fields and cows, where we mean to settle down (after we have once been to Italy), and buy pots and kettles and keep a dog. Wherever we are we work hard, — and at work which brings *present* money; for we have too many depending on us to be *dilettanti* or idlers.

I wish it to be understood that I should never invite any one to come and see me who did not ask for the invitation.

You wonder how my face has changed in the last three years. Doubtless it is older and uglier, but it ought not to have a bad expression, for I never have anything to call out my ill-humour or discontent, — which you know were always ready enough to come on slight call, — and I have everything to call out love and gratitude.

Your letter was very sweet to me. The sense of my deficiencies in the past often presses on me with a discouraging weight, and to know that any one can remember me lovingly, helps me to believe that there has been some good to balance the evil.

Letter to Mrs. John Cash (Miss Mary Sibree), 6th June, 1857.

I like to think of you as a happy wife and mother; and since Rosehill must have new tenants, I like to think that you and yours are there rather than any one else, not only because of my own confidence in your nature, but because our dear friends love you so much as a neighbour. You know I can never feel otherwise than sorry that they should not have ended their days in that pretty home; but the inevitable regret is softened as much as possible by the fact that the home has become yours.

It is very nice to hear that Mrs. Sibree can relish anything of my writing. She was always a favourite with me; and I remember very vividly many pleasant little conversations with her. Seventy-two! How happy you are to have a dear, aged mother, whose heart you can gladden!

I was a good deal touched by the letter your brother wrote to you about accepting, or rather declining, more pupils. I feel sure that his sensi-

tive nature has its peculiar trials and struggles in this strange life of ours, which some thick-skinned mortals take so easily.

I am very happy, — happy in the highest blessing life can give us, the perfect love and sympathy of a nature that stimulates my own to healthful activity. I feel too that all the terrible pain I have gone through in past years, partly from the defects of my own nature, partly from outward things, has probably been a preparation for some special work that I may do before I die. That is a blessed hope, to be rejoiced in with trembling. But even if that hope should be unfulfilled, I am contented to have lived and suffered for the sake of what has already been. You see your kind letter has made me inclined to talk about myself, but as we do not often have any communication with each other, I know it will be a gratification to your sympathetic nature to have a few direct words from me that will assure you of my moral well being.

I hope your little ones are just like you, — just as fair and sweet-tempered.

I sent off the first part of "Janet's Repentance," but to my disappointment Blackwood did not like it so well, — seemed to misunderstand the characters, and to be doubtful about the treatment of clerical matters. I wrote at once to beg him to give up printing the story if he felt uncomfortable about it, and he immediately sent a very anxious, cordial letter, saying the thought of putting a stop to the series "gave him quite a turn;" he "did not meet with George Eliots every day," and so on.

Journal, June, 1857.

I am not much surprised and not at all hurt by your letter received to-day with the proof. It is

a great satisfaction — in fact, my only satisfaction — that you should give me your judgment with perfect frankness. I am able, I think, to enter into an editor's doubts and difficulties, and to see my stories in some degree from your point of view as well as my own. My answer is written after considering the question as far as possible on all sides, and as I feel that I shall not be able to make any other than *superficial* alterations in the proof, I will, first of all, say what I can in explanation of the spirit and future course of the present story.

Letter to John Blackwood, 11th June, 1857.

The collision in the drama is not at all between "bigoted churchmanship" and evangelicalism, but between *ir*religion and religion. Religion in this case happens to be represented by evangelicalism; and the story, so far as regards the *persecution*, is a real bit in the religious history of England, that happened about eight-and-twenty years ago. I thought I had made it apparent in my sketch of Milby feelings, on the advent of Mr. Tryan, that the conflict lay between immorality and morality, — irreligion and religion. Mr. Tryan will carry the reader's sympathy. It is through him that Janet is brought to repentance. Dempster's vices have their natural evolution in deeper and deeper moral deterioration (though not without softening touches), and death from intemperance. Everything is softened from the fact, so far as art is permitted to soften and yet to remain essentially true.

My sketches, both of Churchmen and Dissenters, with whom I am almost equally acquainted, are drawn from close observation of them in real life, and not at all from hearsay or from the descriptions of novelists. If I were to undertake to alter language or character, I should be attempting to rep-

resent some vague conception of what may possibly exist in other people's minds, but has no existence in my own. Such of your marginal objections as relate to a mere detail, I can meet without difficulty by alteration; but as an artist I should be utterly powerless if I departed from my own conceptions of life and character. There is nothing to be done with the story, but either to let Dempster and Janet and the rest be as I *see* them, or to renounce it as too painful. I am keenly alive, at once to the scruples and alarms an editor may feel, and to my own utter inability to write under cramping influence, and on this double ground I should like you to consider whether it will not be better to close the series for the "Magazine" *now*. I daresay you will feel no difficulty about publishing a volume containing the story of "Janet's Repentance," and I shall accept that plan with no other feeling than that you have been to me the most liberal and agreeable of editors, and are the man of all others I would choose for a publisher.

My irony, so far as I understand myself, is not directed against opinions, — against any class of religious views, — but against the vices and weaknesses that belong to human nature in every sort of clothing. But it is possible that I may not affect other minds as I intend and wish to affect them, and you are a better judge than I can be of the degree in which I may occasionally be offensive. I should like *not* to be offensive, — I should like to touch every heart among my readers with nothing but loving humour, with tenderness, with belief in goodness. But I may have failed in this case of Janet, at least so far as to have made you feel its publication in the "Magazine" a disagreeable risk. If so, there will be no harm done by

closing the series with No. 2, as I have suggested. If, however, I take your objections to be deeper than they really are, — if you prefer inserting the story in spite of your partial dissatisfaction, I shall of course be happy to appear under "Maga's" wing still.

When I remember what have been the successes in fiction, even as republications from "Maga," I can hardly believe that the public will regard my pictures as exceptionally coarse. But in any case there are too many prolific writers who devote themselves to the production of pleasing pictures, to the exclusion of all disagreeable truths, for me to desire to add to their number. In this respect, at least, I may have some some resemblance to Thackeray, though I am not conscious of being in any way a disciple of his, unless it constitute discipleship to think him, as I suppose the majority of people with any intellect do, on the whole the most powerful of living novelists.

I feel every day a greater disinclination for theories and arguments about the origin of things in the presence of all this mystery and beauty and pain and ugliness that floods one with conflicting emotions.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 8th June, 1857.

We are reading "Aurora Leigh" for the third time with more enjoyment than ever. I know no book that gives me a deeper sense of communion with a large as well as beautiful mind. It is in process of appearing in a third edition, and no wonder.

If I live five years longer, the positive result of my existence on the side of truth and goodness will outweigh the small negative good that would have consisted in my not doing anything to shock others, and I can conceive no consequences that will make

me repent the past. Do not misunderstand me, and suppose that I think myself heroic or great in any way. Far enough from that! Faulty, miserably faulty I am, — but least of all faulty when others most blame.

*On the 24th July the pleasant sojourn at Jersey came to an end. The travellers returned to 8 Park Shot, Richmond, where Miss Sara Hennell paid them a visit at the end of the month, and Dr. and Mrs. Bodichon (*née *Miss Barbara L. Smith) came on the 4th of August. On the 12th August there is an entry in the Journal, "Finished the 'Electra' of Sophocles, and began Æschylus's 'Agamemnon,'" and then come the following letters: —*

Letter to John Blackwood, Tuesday, 17th Aug. 1857.

Lewes has just given me your letter of the 15th with the accompanying one from the Rev. W. P. Jones.

Mr. Tryan is not a portrait of any clergyman, living or dead. He is an ideal character, but I hope probable enough to resemble more than one evangelical clergyman of his day.

If Mr. Jones's deceased brother was like Mr. Tryan, so much the better, for in that case he was made of human nature's finer clay. I think you will agree with me that there are few clergymen who would be depreciated by an identification with Mr. Tryan. But I should rather suppose that the old gentleman, misled by some similarity in outward circumstances, is blind to the discrepancies which must exist where no portrait was intended. As to the rest of my story, so far as its elements were suggested by real persons, those persons have been, to use good Mr. Jones's phrase, "long in eternity."

I think I told you that a persecution of the kind I have described did actually take place, and belongs as much to the common store of our religious

history as the Gorham Controversy, or as Bishop Blomfield's decision about wax candles. But I only know the *outline* of the real persecution. The details have been filled in from my imagination. I should consider it a fault which would cause me lasting regret if I had used reality in any other than the legitimate way common to all artists, who draw their materials from their observation and experience. It would be a melancholy result of my fictions, if I gave *just* cause of annoyance to any good and sensible person. But I suppose there is no perfect safeguard against erroneous impressions or a mistaken susceptibility. We are all apt to forget how little there is about us that is unique, and how very strongly we resemble many other insignificant people who have lived before us. I should n't wonder if several nieces of pedantic maiden ladies saw a portrait of their aunt in Miss Pratt, but I hope they will not think it necessary, on that ground, to increase the already troublesome number of your correspondents.

We went to see Rosa Bonheur's picture the other day. What power! That is the way women should assert their rights. Writing is part of my religion, and I can write no word that is not prompted from within. At the same time I believe that almost all the best books in the world have been written with the hope of getting money for them.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 19th Aug. 1857.

Unless there be any strong reason to the contrary, I should like to close the series with this story. According to my calculation, which, however, may be an erroneous one, the three stories will make two good volumes, — *i. e.*, good as to bulk.

Letter to John Blackwood, 1st Sept. 1857.

I have a subject in my mind which will not come

under the limitations of the title "Clerical Life," and I am inclined to take a large canvas for it and write a novel.

In case of my writing fiction for "Maga" again, I should like to be considerably beforehand with my work, so that you can read a thoroughly decisive portion before beginning to print.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 21st Sept. 1857.

The days are very peaceful, — peacefully busy. One always feels a deeper calm as autumn comes on. I should be satisfied to look forward to a heaven made up of long autumn afternoon walks, quite delivered from any necessity of giving a judgment on the woman question, or of reading newspapers about Indian mutinies. I am so glad there are thousands of good people in the world who have very decided opinions, and are fond of working hard to enforce them. I like to feel and think everything and do nothing, a pool of the "deep contemplative" kind.

Some people *do* prosper, — that is a comfort. The rest of us must fall back on the beatitudes, — "Blessed are the poor," — that is Luke's version, you know, and it is really, on the whole, more comforting than Matthew's. I 'm afraid there are few of us who can appropriate the blessings of the "poor in spirit."

We are reading one of the most wonderful books in French or any other literature, — Monteil's "Histoire des Français des divers États," — a history written on an original plan. If you see any account of it, read that account.

Letter to John Blackwood, Saturday, 17th Oct. 1857.

I am very much gratified that my Janet has won your heart and kept up your interest in her to the end.

My new story haunts me a good deal, and I shall set about it without delay. It will be

a country story, — full of the breath of cows and the scent of hay. But I shall not ask you to look at it till I have written a volume or more, and then you will be able to judge whether you will prefer printing it in the "Magazine," or publishing it as a separate novel when it is completed.

By the way, the sheets of the "Clerical Scenes" are not come, but I shall not want to make any other than verbal and literal corrections, so that it will hardly be necessary for me to go through the sheets *and* the proofs, which I must, of course, see.

I enclose a titlepage with a motto. But if you don't like the motto I give it up. I 've not set my heart on it.

I leave the number of copies to be published, and the style of getting up, entirely to your discretion. As to the terms, I wish to retain the copyright, according to the stipulation made for me by Lewes when he sent "Amos Barton;" and whatever you can afford to give me for the first edition, I shall prefer having as a definite payment rather than as half profits.

You stated, in a letter about "Amos Barton," your willingness to accede to either plan, so I have no hesitation in expressing my wishes.

"Open to conviction," indeed! I should think so. I am open to conviction on all points except dinner and debts. I hold that the one must be eaten and the other paid. These are my only prejudices.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 20th Oct. 1857.

I *was* pleased with Mr. Call.[1] He is a man one

[1] Mr. W. M. W. Call, author of "Reverberations and other Poems," who married Mr. Charles Hennell's widow, — formerly Miss Brabant. As will be seen from the subsequent correspondence, Mr. and Mrs. Call remained amongst the Leweses' warm friends to the end, and Mr. Call is the author of an interesting paper on George Eliot in the "Westminster Review" of July, 1881.

really cares to talk to, — has thoughts, says what he means, and listens to what others say. We should quite like to see him often. And I cannot tell you how much I have felt Mrs. Call's graceful as well as kind behaviour to me. Some months ago, before the new edition of the "Biographical History of Philosophy" came out, Mr. Lewes had a letter from a working-man at Leicester, I think, who said that he and some fellow students met together, on a Sunday, to read the book aloud and discuss it. He had marked some errors of the press, and sent them to Mr. Lewes for his new edition. Was n't that pretty?

"Conscience goes to the hammering in of nails" is my gospel. There can be no harm in preaching *that* to women at any rate. But I should be sorry to undertake any more specific enunciation of doctrine on a question so entangled as the "woman question." The part of the Epicurean gods is always an easy one; but because I prefer it so strongly myself, I the more highly venerate those who are struggling in the thick of the contest. "La carrière ouverte aux talens," whether the talents be feminine or masculine, I am quite confident is a right maxim. Whether "La carrière ouverte à la sottise" be equally just when made equally universal, it would be too much like "taking sides" for me to say.

Letter to the Brays, 30th Oct. 1857.

*There are only three entries in the journal for October.*

*Oct.* 9. — Finished "Janet's Repentance." I had meant to carry on the series, and especially I longed to tell the story of the "Clerical Tutor," but my annoyance at Blackwood's want of sympathy in the first part (although he came

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round to admiration at the third part) determined me to close the series and republish them in two volumes.

*Oct.* 22. — Began my new novel "Adam Bede."

*Oct.* 29. — Received a letter from Blackwood offering me £120 for the first edition of "Scenes of Clerical Life."

Letter to John Blackwood, 30th Oct. 1857.

I am quite contented with the sum (£120) you offer me for the edition, being thoroughly confident of your disposition to do the best you can for me. I perceive your hope of success for the "Scenes" is not strong, and you certainly have excellent means of knowing the probabilities in such a case.

I am not aware that the motto has been used before; but if you suspect it, we had better leave it out altogether. A stale motto would hardly be an ornament to the titlepage.

Letter to Mrs. Bray, 1st Nov. 1857.

How I wish I could get to you by some magic, and have one walk over the hill with you again! Letters are poor things compared with five minutes of looking and speaking, and one kiss. Nevertheless, I do like to have a little letter now and then, though I don't for a moment ask it if you have no spontaneous impulse to give it. I can't help losing belief that people love me, — the unbelief is in my nature, and no sort of fork will drive it finally out. I can't help wondering that you can think of *me* in the past with much pleasure. It all seems so painful to me, — made up of blunders and selfishness, — and it only comes back upon me as a thing to be forgiven. That is honest painful truth, and not sentimentality. But I am thankful if others found more good than I am able to remember.

It is pleasant to have the first sheet of one's

proof, — to see one's paragraphs released from the tight-lacing of double columns, and expanding themselves at their ease.

Letter to John Blackwood, 7th Nov. 1857.

I perceive clearly the desirableness of the short number, — for my observation of literary affairs has gone far enough to convince me that neither critical judgment nor practical experience can guarantee any opinion as to rapidity of sale, in the case of an unknown author; and I shudder at the prospect of encumbering my publishers' bookshelves.

My new story is in progress, — slow progress at present. A little sunshine of success would stimulate its growth, I daresay. Unhappily, I am as impressionable as I am obstinate, and as much in need of sympathy from my readers as I am incapable of bending myself to their tastes. But if I can only find a public as cordial and agreeable in its treatment of me as my editor, I shall have nothing to wish. Even my thin skin will be comfortable then. The page is not a shabby one, after all; but I fear the fact of two volumes instead of three is a fatal feature in my style in the eyes of librarians.

One is glad to have one's book (*apropos* of review of Lewes's " History of Philosophy ") spoken well of by papers of good circulation,

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 9th Nov. 1857.

because it is possible, though not certain, that such praise may help the sale; but otherwise it is hardly worth while to trouble one's self about newspaper reviews, unless they point out some error, or present that very rare phenomenon, a true appreciation, which is the most delicious form in which sympathy can reach one. So much sectarian feeling usually arises in discussions on the subject of phrenology, that I confess the associations of the word are not agreeable to me. The

last refuge of intolerance is in not tolerating the intolerant; and I am often in danger of secreting that sort of venom.

It is pleasant to have a kind word now and then, when one is not near enough to have a kind glance or a hearty shake by the hand. It is an old weakness of mine to have no faith in affection that does not express itself; and when friends take no notice of me for a long while, I generally settle down into the belief that they have become indifferent or have begun to dislike me. That is not the best mental constitution; but it might be worse, — for I don't feel obliged to dislike *them* in consequence. I, for one, ought not to complain if people think worse of me than I deserve, for I have very often reason to be ashamed of my thoughts about others. They almost always turn out to be better than I expected, — fuller of kindness towards me at least. In the fundamental doctrine of your book ("The Philosophy of Necessity"), — that mind presents itself under the same conditions of invariableness of antecedent and consequent as all other phenomena (the only difference being that the true antecedent and consequent are proportionately difficult to discover as the phenomena are more complex), — I think you know that I agree. And every one who knows what science means must also agree with you that there can be no social science without the admission of that doctrine. I dislike extremely a passage in which you appear to consider the disregard of individuals as a lofty condition of mind. My own experience and development deepen every day my conviction that our moral progress may be measured by the degree in which we sympathise with individual suffering and

Letter to Charles Bray, 15th Nov. 1857.

individual joy. The fact that in the scheme of things we see a constant and tremendous sacrifice of individuals is, it seems to me, only one of the many proofs that urge upon us our total inability to find in our own natures a key to the Divine mystery. I could more readily turn Christian, and worship Jesus again, than embrace a Theism which professes to explain the proceedings of God. But I don't feel at all wise in these matters. I have a few strong impressions which serve me for my own support and guidance, but do not in the least qualify me to speak as a theorist.

Mr. Lewes sends you his kind remembrances, and will not like you any the worse for cutting him up. He has had to perform that office for his own friends sometimes. I suppose phrenology is an open question, on which everybody has a right to speak his mind. Mr. Lewes, feeling the importance of the subject, desired to give it its due place in his "History of Philosophy," and doing so, he must, of course, say what *he* believes to be the truth, not what other people believe to be the truth. If you will show where he is mistaken, you will be doing him a service as well as phrenology. His arguments may be bad; but I will answer for him that he has not been guilty of any intentional unfairness. With regard to their system, phrenologists seem to me to be animated by the same sort of spirit as that of religious dogmatists, and especially in this, — that in proportion as a man approximates to their opinions without identifying himself with them, they think him offensive and contemptible. It is amusing to read from the opposite side complaints against Mr. Lewes for giving too high a position to phrenology, and a confident opinion that "phrenologists, by their

ridiculous pretensions, merit all the contempt that has been thrown on them." Thus doctors differ! But I am much less interested in crusades for or against phrenology than in your happiness at Ivy Cottage.[1] Happiness means all sorts of love and good feeling; and that is the best result that can ever come out of science. Do you know Buckle's "History of Civilisation"? I think you would find it a suggestive book.

Anniversaries are sad things, — to one who has lived long and done little. Herbert Spencer dined with us the other day, — looks well, and is brimful of clever talk as usual. His volume of "Essays" is to come out soon. He is just now on a crusade against the notion of "species." We are reading Harriet Martineau's history with edification, and otherwise feeding our souls, which flourish very well, notwithstanding November weather.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 24th Nov. 1857.

*Nov.* 28. — A glorious day, still autumnal and not wintry. We have had a delicious walk in the Park, and I think the colouring of the scenery is more beautiful than ever. Many of the oaks are still thickly covered with leaves of a rich yellow-brown; the elms, golden sometimes, still with lingering patches of green. On our way to the Park the view from Richmond Hill had a delicate blue mist over it, that seemed to hang like a veil before the sober brownish-yellow of the distant elms. As we came home, the sun was setting on a fog-bank, and we saw him sink into that purple ocean, — the orange and gold passing into green above the fog-bank, the gold and orange reflected in the river in more sombre tints. The other day, as we were coming home

Journal, 1857.

[1] The Brays' new house at Coventry.

through the Park, after having walked under a sombre, heavily clouded sky, the western sun shone out from under the curtain, and lit up the trees and grass, thrown into relief on a background of dark-purple cloud. Then, as we advanced towards the Richmond end of the Park, the level reddening rays shone on the dry fern and the distant oaks, and threw a crimson light on them. I have especially enjoyed this autumn, the delicious greenness of the turf, in contrast with the red and yellow of the dying leaves.

*Dec.* 6 (*Sunday*). — Finished the "Agamemnon" to-day. In the evenings of late we have been reading Harriet Martineau's "Sketch of the British Empire in India," and are now following it up with Macaulay's articles on Clive and Hastings. We have lately read Harriet Martineau's Introduction to the "History of the Peace."

*Dec.* 8. — I am reading "Die Familie," by Riehl, forming the third volume of the series, the two first of which, "Land und Volk," and "Die Bürgerliche Gesellschaft," I reviewed for the "Westminster."

A letter from Blackwood to-day tells us that Major Blackwood, during his brother's absence in England, having some reasons, not specified, for being more hopeful about the "Clerical Scenes," resolved to publish 1000 instead of 750; and in consequence of this, Blackwood promises to pay me an additional £60 when 750 shall have been sold off. He reports that an elderly clergyman has written to him to say that "Janet's Repentance" is exquisite, — another vote to register along with that of Mrs. Nutt's rector, who "cried over the story like a child."

*Dec.* 10. — Major Blackwood called, — an unaffected, agreeable man. It was evident to us, when he had only been in the room a few minutes, that he knew I was George Eliot.

Lewes has read to me your last kind letter, and I am not insensible to the "practical cheerer" it contains. But I rejoice with trembling at the additional 250, lest you should have to repent of them. Letter to John Blackwood, 11th Dec. 1857

I have certainly had a good deal of encouragement to believe that there are many minds, both of the more cultured sort and of the common novel-reading class, likely to be touched by my stories; but the word "many" is very elastic, and often shrinks frightfully when measured by a financial standard.

When one remembers how long it was before Charles Lamb's Essays were known familiarly to any but the elect few, the very strongest assurance of merit or originality — supposing one so happy as to have that assurance — could hardly do more than give the hope of *ultimate* recognition.

Our affairs are very prosperous just now, making sunshine in a shady or rather a foggy place. It is a great happiness to me that Mr. Lewes gets more and more of the recognition he deserves; pleasant letters and speeches have been very numerous lately, especially about his "Sea-side Studies" which have appeared in "Blackwood," and are soon to appear — very much improved and enlarged — in a separate volume. Dear Carlyle writes, *apropos* of his "Frederic": "I have had such a fourteen months as was never appointed me before in this world, — sorrow, darkness, and disgust my daily compan- Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 13th Dec. 1857.

ions; and no outlook visible, except getting a detestable business turned off, or else being driven mad by it." That is his exaggerated way of speaking; and writing is always painful to him. Do you know he is sixty-two! I fear this will be his last book. Tell Mr. Bray I am reading a book of Riehl's, "The Family," forming the sequel to his other volumes. He will be pleased to hear that so good a writer agrees with him on several points about the occupations of women. The book is a good one; and if I were in the way of writing articles, I should write one on it. There is so much to read, and the days are so short! I get more hungry for knowledge every day, and less able to satisfy my hunger. Time is like the Sibylline leaves, getting more precious the less there remains of it. That, I believe, is the correct allusion for a fine writer to make on the occasion.

I give up the motto, because it struck you as having been used before; and though I copied it into my note-book when I was re-reading "Amelia" a few months ago, it is one of those obvious quotations which never *appear* fresh, though they may actually be be made for the first time.

Letter to John Blackwood, 15th Dec. 1857.

I shall be curious to know the result of the subscription.

There are a few persons to whom I should like a copy of the volume to be sent, and I enclose a list of them.

*Dec.* 17. — Read my new story to G. this evening as far as the end of the third chapter. He praised it highly. I have finished "Die Familie," by Riehl, — a delightful book. I am in the "Choephoræ" now. In the evenings we are reading "History of the Thirty Years'

Journal, 1857.

Peace" and Béranger. Thoroughly disappointed in Béranger.

*Dec.* 19 (*Saturday*). — Alone this evening with very thankful, solemn thoughts, — feeling the great and unhoped-for blessings that have been given me in life. This last year, especially, has been marked by inward progress and outward advantages. In the spring George's "History of Philosophy" appeared in the new edition; his "Sea-side Studies" have been written with much enjoyment, and met with much admiration, and now they are on the verge of being published with bright prospects. Blackwood has also accepted his "Physiology of Common Life;" the "Goethe" has passed into its third German edition; and best of all, G.'s head is well. I have written the "Scenes of Clerical Life," — my first book; and though we are uncertain still whether it will be a success as a separate publication, I have had much sympathy from my readers in "Blackwood," and feel a deep satisfaction in having done a bit of faithful work that will perhaps remain like a primrose root in the hedgerow, and gladden and chasten human hearts in years to come.

Buckle's is a book full of suggestive material, though there are some strangely unphilosophic opinions mixed with its hardy philosophy. For example, he holds that there is no such thing as *race* or *hereditary transmission* of qualities! (I should tell you, at the same time, that he is a necessitarian and a physiological-psychologist). It is only by such negations as these that he can find his way to the position which he maintains at great length, — that the progress of mankind is dependent entirely on the progress of knowledge, and that there has been no

Letter to the Brays, 23d Dec. 1857.

intrinsically moral advance. However, he presents that side of the subject which has perhaps been least adequately dwelt on.

*Dec.* 25. — (*Christmas Day*). — George and I spent this lovely day together, — lovely as a clear spring day. We could see Hampstead from the Park so distinctly that it seemed to have suddenly come nearer to us. We ate our turkey together in a happy *solitude à deux*.

Journal, 1857.

*Dec.* 31 (*the last night of* 1857). — The dear old year is gone, with all its *Weben* and *Streben*. Yet not gone either: for what I have suffered and enjoyed in it remains to me an everlasting possession while my soul's life remains. This time last year I was alone, as I am now, and dear George was at Vernon Hill. I was writing the introduction to "Mr. Gilfil's Love-Story." What a world of thoughts and feelings since then! My life has deepened unspeakably during the last year: I feel a greater capacity for moral and intellectual enjoyment; a more acute sense of my deficiencies in the past; a more solemn desire to be faithful to coming duties than I remember at any former period of my life. And my happiness has deepened too: the blessedness of a perfect love and union grows daily. I have had some severe suffering this year from anxiety about my sister, and what will probably be a final separation from her, — there has been no other real trouble. Few women, I fear, have had such reason as I have to think the long sad years of youth were worth living for the sake of middle age. Our prospects are very bright too. I am writing my new novel. G. is full of his "Physiology of Common Life." He has just finished editing Johnston, for which he is to have

100 guineas, and we have both encouragement to think that our books just coming out, "Sea-side Studies" and "Scenes of Clerical Life," will be well received. So good-bye, dear 1857! May I be able to look back on 1858 with an equal consciousness of advancement in work *and in heart!*

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER VII

MARCH, 1855, TO DECEMBER, 1857

Return to England — Dover — Bayswater — East Sheen — Books read — Articles written — Letters to Miss Hennell — "Life of Goethe" — Froude's article on Spinoza — Article writing — "Cumming" — 8 Park Shot, Richmond — Letter to Charles Bray — Effect of article on Cumming — Letter to Miss Hennell — Reading on Physiology — Article on Heine — Review for "Leader," &c. — Books read — Visit to Mrs. Clarke at Attleboro — Sale of "Life of Goethe" — "Shaving of Shagpat" — Spinoza's "Ethics," translation finished — The "Saturday Review" — Ruskin — Alison — Harriet Martineau — Women's earnings — Articles and reviews — Wishes not to be known as translator of the "Ethics" — Article on Young begun — Visit to Ilfracombe — Description — Zoophyte hunting — Finished articles on Young and Riehl — Naturalistic experience — Delightful walks — Rev. Mr. Tugwell — Devonshire lanes and springs — Tendency to scientific accuracy — Sunsets — Cocklewomen at Swansea — Letters to Miss Hennell and Mrs. Peter Taylor — Tenby — Zoology — Thoreau's "Walden" — Feeling strong in mind and body — Barbara Leigh Smith comes to Tenby — George Eliot anxious to begin her fiction writing — Mr. E. F. S. Pigott — Return to Richmond — Mr. Lewes takes his boys to Hofwyl — George Eliot writes article on "Silly Novels by Lady Novelists" — "How I came to write fiction" — Correspondence between Mr. Lewes and Mr. John Blackwood about MS. of "Amos Barton" — "Mr. Gilfil's Love-Story" begun — Books read — Letter from John Blackwood to the author of "Amos Barton," sending copy of the January, 1857, number of the Magazine and fifty guineas — Reply — Blackwood's admiration — Albert Smith's appreciation — Letters to Blackwood — Name of George Eliot assumed — Dutch school in art — Artistic bent — Letter to Miss Hennell — Intolerance — Letter to John Blackwood on Mr. Swayne comparing writing to Goldsmith's — Letter to Miss Hennell on essay, "Christianity and Infidelity" — Letter to Blackwood — Caterina and the dagger scene — Trip to Penzance and the Scilly Isles — Description of St. Mary's — Mr. Moyle, the surgeon — Social life — Letter to Mrs. Bray — Anxiety about sister — Letter to Miss Sara Hennell — "Life of Charlotte Brontë" — Letter to Isaac P. Evans — Mrs. Clarke's illness — Letter to Blackwood — Conclusions of stories — Jersey — Description of Gorey — Delightful walks — Reading Draper's "Physiology" — Miss Catlow and Dr. Thomson on wild flowers — "Life of George Stephenson" — Letter to Miss Hennell — Life in Jersey — Liggins appears on the scene — "Janet's Repentance" — Series attributed to Bulwer — Thackeray thinks highly of it — Letter from Herbert Spencer about "Mr. Gilfil" — Letter from Archer Gurney — Lord Stanley thinks highly of the "Scenes" — Letter to Blackwood, with first part of "Janet's Repentance" — Letter to Mrs. Bray — Richmond — Expression of face — Letter to Mrs. John Cash — Happiness in her life and hope in her work — Chilled by Blackwood's want of enthusiasm about "Janet" — Letter to John Blackwood on "Janet" — Letter to Miss Sara Hennell

— "Aurora Leigh" — Return to Richmond — Letter to John Blackwood on "Janet" — Letters to Miss Hennell — Rosa Bonheur — Thought, not action — Mr. and Mrs. Call — Letter to John Blackwood — Haunted by new story — Letter to Charles Bray — The "Woman Question" — Close of "Clerical Scenes" series — "Adam Bede" begun — Receives £120 for first edition of "Scenes of Clerical Life" — Letter to Mrs. Bray — Unbelief in people's love — Letter to John Blackwood — Sheets of "Clerical Scenes" — Letter to Miss Hennell — Newspaper criticism — Letter to Charles Bray — "The Philosophy of Necessity" — Sympathy with individuals — Objection to Theism — Phrenology — Happiness the best result that can ever come out of science — Letters to Miss Hennell — Reading Riehl's "The Family" — Hunger for knowledge — Buckle's "History of Civilisation" — Autumn days at Richmond — Reading the "Agamemnon" — Harriet Martineau's "Sketch of the British Empire in India" — Macaulay's essays on Clive and Hastings — Major Blackwood calls, and suspects identity of George Eliot — Reading the "Choephoræ" — "History of the Thirty Years' Peace," and Béranger — Thankfulness in reviewing experience of 1857.

# APPENDIX

AS this volume is going through the press, I have to thank Mrs. John Cash of Coventry for the following valuable additional information in regard to the important subject of Miss Evans's change of religious belief in 1841–42, and for her further general recollections of the Coventry period of George Eliot's life: —

I was sixteen years of age in 1841; and, as I have already stated, my first remembrance of Miss Evans is of her call on my father and mother, with their friend and neighbour Mrs. Pears, when in conversation she gave expression to her great appreciation of the writings of Isaac Taylor. The controversy raised by the "Tracts for the Times," which gave occasion for the publication of Mr. Taylor's "Ancient Christianity," being now remote, I give the following extract from a footnote in Trench's "Notes on the Parables," to show the influence such a work as Mr. Taylor's would be likely to exercise on the mind of one who esteemed its author; and also the feeling it excited against an eminently religious man, by revelations which he desired and believed would serve the cause of New Testament Christianity. The note is on the "Tares." The quotation, containing the reference, is from Menken.

"Many so-called Church historians (*authors of 'Ancient Christianity' and the like*), ignorant of the purpose and of the hidden glory of the Church, have their pleasure in the Tares, and imagine

themselves wonderfully wise and useful when out of Church history (which ought to be the history of the Light and the Truth) they have made a shameful history of error and wickedness."

It was upon her first or second interview with my mother that Miss Evans told her how shocked she had been by the apparent union of religious feeling with a low sense of morality among the people in the district she visited, who were mostly Methodists. She gave as an instance the case of a woman, who, when a falsehood was clearly brought home to her by her visitors, said, "She did not feel that she had grieved the Spirit much." Now those readers of the letters to Miss Lewis who are acquainted with modern Evangelicalism, even in its "after-glow," especially as it was presented to the world by Church of England teaching and practice, will recognise its characteristics in the moral scrupulousness, the sense of obligation on the part of Christians to avoid the very appearance of evil, the practical piety which those letters reveal.

Mrs. Evans (Miss Lewis tells me) was a very serious, earnest-minded woman, anxiously concerned for the moral and religious training of her children; glad to place them under the care of such persons as the Misses Franklin, to whose school a mother of a different order objected, on the ground that "it was where that saint Mary Ann Evans had been."

It is natural, then, that, early awed by and attracted towards beliefs cherished by the best persons she had known, and advocated in the best books she had read, the mind of Miss Evans should have been stirred by exhibitions of a *theoretic* severance of religion from morality, whether pre-

sented among the disciples of "Ancient Christianity" or by the subjects of its modern revivals: it is probable that she may thereby have been led, as others have been, to a reconsideration of the creeds of Christendom, and to further inquiry concerning their origin.

On the same grounds it is likely that the presentation of social virtues, apart from evangelical motives, would impress her; and I have authority for stating that to the inquiry of a friend in after years, as to what influence she attributed the first unsettlement of her orthodox views, she quickly made answer: "Oh, Walter Scott's." Now I well remember her speaking to me of Robert Hall's confession that he had been made unhappy for a week by the reading of Miss Edgeworth's Tales, in which useful, good, and pleasant lives are lived with no reference to religious hopes and fears; and her drawing my attention to the real greatness of mind and sincerity of faith which this candid confession betokened. Such remarks, I think, throw light upon the *way* in which her own evangelical belief had been affected by works in which its dogmas are not enforced as necessary springs of virtuous action.

I give these scattered reminiscences, in evidence of the half-unconscious preparation (of which Mr. Cross speaks), for a change which was, in my judgment, more gradual in its development, as well as deeper in its character, than might be inferred from the record of its abrupt following upon Miss Evans's introduction to Mr. Hennell's "Inquiry concerning the Origin of Christianity."

The evening's discussion with my father, to which I have referred in my previous communica-

tion in the "Life," is now vividly present to my mind. There was not only on her part a vehemence of tone, startling in one so quiet, but a crudeness in her objections, an absence of proposed solution of difficulties, which partly distressed and partly pleased me (siding as I did mentally with my father), and which was in strange contrast to the satisfied calm which marked her subsequent treatment of religious differences.

Upon my father's using an argument (common enough in those days) drawn from the present condition of the Jews as a fulfilment of prophecy, and saying, "If I were tempted to doubt the truth of the Bible, I should only have to look at a Jew to confirm my faith in it," "Don't talk to me of the Jews!" Miss Evans retorted, in an irritated tone; "to think that they were deluded into expectations of a temporal deliverer, and then punished because they could n't understand that it was a spiritual deliverer that was intended!" To something that followed from her, intimating the claim of creatures upon their Creator, my father objected, "But we have no claim upon God." "No claim upon God!" she reiterated indignantly; "we have the strongest possible claim upon Him."

I regret that I can recall nothing more of a conversation carried on for more than two hours; but I vividly remember how deeply Miss Evans was moved, and how, as she stood against the mantelpiece during the last part of the time, her delicate fingers, in which she held a small piece of muslin on which she was at work, trembled with her agitation.

The impression allowed to remain upon the minds of her friends, for some time after she had made declaration of her heresies, was of her being

in a troubled, unsettled state. So great were her simplicity and candour in acknowledging this, and so apparent was her earnest desire for truth, that no hesitation was felt in asking her to receive visits from persons of different persuasions, who were judged competent to bring forward the best arguments in favour of orthodox doctrines. One of these was a Baptist minister, introduced to her by Miss Franklin: he was said to be well read in divinity, and I remember him as an original and interesting preacher. After an interview with Miss Evans, meeting my father, he said: "That young lady must have had the devil at her elbow to suggest her doubts, for there was not a book that I recommended to her in support of Christian evidences that she had not read."

Mr. Watts, one of the professors at Spring Hill College (Independent), Birmingham, a colleague of Mr. Henry Rogers, author of the "Eclipse of Faith," and who had himself studied at the Hallé University, and enjoyed the friendship of Dr. Tholück, was requested (I think by my mother) to call on Miss Evans. His acquaintance with German Rationalism (rare in England in those days) qualified him to enter into, and it was hoped to meet, difficulties raised by a critical study of the New Testament. After his first or second interview, my brother remembers his observing with emphasis, "*She* has gone into the question;" and I can recall a reference made by him at a later date in my hearing to Miss Evans's discontent with her own solutions, — or rather with her own standpoint at that time. This discontent he said "was so far satisfactory." Doubtless it gave him hope of the reconversion of one who had, as he told my mother, awakened deep interest in his own mind,

as much by the earnestness which characterised her inquiries as by her exceptional attainments.

From letters that passed between my brother and myself during his residence in Germany, I give the following extracts referring to this period.

The first is from one of mine, dated September 2, 1842.

"In my father's absence we (my mother and I) called on Miss Evans. She now takes up a different position. Her views are not altogether altered, but she says it would be extreme arrogance in so young a person to suppose she had obtained *yet* any just ideas of truth. She had been reading Dr. Tholück's reply to Strauss's 'Life of Jesus,' but said Mr. Watts had advised her *not* to read his 'Guido and Julius.'"

In answer to this my brother says, in a letter dated, Hallé, September 26, 1842: "You have given, doubtless, a very accurate account of Miss Evans's mode of stating her present sentiments. Mr. Watts's reason for advising that Dr. Tholück's 'Guido and Julius' be not read is, perhaps, that the reasoning is not satisfactory."

In another letter, addressed to my brother at Hallé, and dated October 28, 1842, I tell him: "Last week mother and I spent an evening with Miss Evans. She seems more settled in her views than ever, and rests her objections to Christianity on this ground, that Calvinism is Christianity, and, this granted, that it is a religion based on pure selfishness. She occupied, however, a great part of the time in pleading for works of imagination, maintaining that they perform an office for the mind which nothing else can. On the mention of Shakspeare, she praised him with her characteristic ardour, was shocked at the idea that mother

should disapprove the perusal of his writings, and quite distressed lest, through her influence, I should be prevented from reading them. She could be content were she allowed no other book than Shakspeare; and in educating a child, this would be the first book she would place in its hands.

" She seems to have read a great deal of Italian literature, and speaks with rapture of Metastasio's novels. She has lent me ' Le mie Prigioni ' di Silvio Pellico, in his own tongue, as a book to begin with. She says there is a prevailing but very mistaken idea that Italian is an easy language, though she is exceedingly delighted with it. If at any time I wish to begin German, she would very much like to give me some instruction."

In addition to the above relating to Shakspeare, I recall the protest that my mother's objection to his plays (my mother *had* been an ardent lover of " the play "), on the ground that there were things in them that offended her, was as reasonable as the objection to walk in a beautiful garden, " because toads and weeds are to be found in it."

In a letter dated March 6, 1843, I write to my brother: " Your request that you may be informed as to the precise nature of Miss Evans's philosophical views, I shall find it very difficult to comply with, inasmuch as on our last interview she did not express herself so fully on this subject as formerly; indeed I believe she is not now so desirous of controversy. She however appeared, to me at least, to have rather changed her ground on some points. For instance, she said she considered Jesus Christ as the embodiment of perfect love, and seemed to be leaning slightly to the doctrines of Carlyle and Emerson when she remarked that she considered the Bible a revelation in a certain sense,

as she considered herself a revelation of the mind of Deity, &c. She was very anxious to know if you had heard Schelling."

In a letter addressed to my brother at Spring Hill College, and dated October 28, 1844, I find this reference to Dr. Harris, who had been preaching a charity sermon in a chapel at Foleshill.

"Miss Evans has just been reproaching me for not informing her of Dr. Harris's preaching, which she would have given anything to hear, as she says his 'Great Teacher' left more delightful impressions on her mind than anything she ever read, and is, she thinks, the best book that could be written by a man holding his principles."

In the same letter I mention a second lesson in German given me by Miss Evans. In one written some time before, I tell my brother of her kind proposal, but add that my parents object "on account of her dangerous sentiments." She had, however, since called at our house one morning to renew it; and I well remember how eagerly I watched my mother, looking so affectionately at Miss Evans, and saying quietly, "You know, with your superior intellect, I cannot help fearing you might influence Mary, though you might not intend to do so. But," she went on to say, "her father does not agree with me: he does not see any danger, and thinks we ought not to refuse, as it is so very kind of you to be willing to take the trouble, — and we know it would be a great advantage to her to learn German; for she will probably have to earn her living by teaching." Seeing at a glance how matters stood, Miss Evans turned round quickly to me, and said, "Come on Saturday at three o'clock, and bring what books you have."

So I went, and began "Don Carlos," continuing

to go, with some intervals occasioned by absence, pretty regularly on Saturday afternoons, for nearly two years; but it was not until the end of the second year, when I received Miss Evans's suggestion that the lessons were no longer necessary and should be discontinued, that I fully realised what this companionship had been to me. The loss was like the loss of sunshine.

No promise had been given that my religious belief should be undisturbed, nor was any needed. Interest was turned aside from Calvinism and Arminianism, which at an early age had engaged my attention, towards manifestations of nobility of character, and sympathy with human struggles and sufferings under varied conditions. The character of the "Marquis von Posa" (in "Don Carlos") roused an enthusiasm for heroism and virtue, which it was delightful to express to one who so fully shared it. Placing together one day the works of Schiller, which were in two or three volumes, Miss Evans said, "Oh, if *I* had given these to the world, how happy I should be!"

It must have been to confirm myself in my traditional faith by confession of it, that I once took upon myself to say to her how sure I was that there could be no true morality without evangelical belief. "Oh, it is so, is it?" she said, with the kindest smile, and nothing further passed. From time to time, however, her reverence and affection for the character of Christ and the Apostle Paul, and her sympathy with genuine religious feeling, were very clear to me. Expressing one day her horror of a crowd, she said, "I never would press through one, unless it were to see a second Jesus." The words startled me, — the conception of Jesus Christ in my mind being so little associated with

a human form; but they impressed me with a certain reality of feeling which I contrasted, as I did Miss Evans's abiding interest in great principles, with the somewhat factitious and occasional as well as fitful affection and concern manifest in many whom I looked up to as " converted " people.

Once only do I remember such contrast being made by herself. She attended the service at the opening of a new church at Foleshill with her father, and remarked to me the next day, that looking at the gaily dressed people, she could not help thinking how much easier life would be to her, and how much better she should stand in the estimation of her neighbours, if only she could take things as they did, be satisfied with outside pleasures, and conform to the popular beliefs without any reflection or examination. Once, too, after being in the company of educated persons " professing and calling themselves Christians," she commented to me on the *tone* of conversation, often frivolous, sometimes ill-natured, that seemed yet to excite in no one any sense of impropriety.

It must have been in those early days that she spoke to me of a visit from one of her uncles in Derbyshire, a Wesleyan, and how much she had enjoyed talking with him, finding she could enter into his feelings so much better than she had done in past times, when her views seemed more in accordance with his own, but were really less so.

Amongst other books, I remember the " Life of Dr. Arnold " interested her deeply. Speaking of it to me one morning, she referred to a conversation she had had with a friend the evening before, and said they had agreed that it was a great good for such men to remain within the pale of ortho-

doxy, that so they might draw from the old doctrines the best that was to be got from them.

Of criticisms on German books read with Miss Evans, I recall one or two. In the "Robbers," she criticised the attempt to enhance the horror of the situation of the abandoned father, by details of physical wretchedness, as a mistake in Art. "Wallenstein" she ranked higher from an intellectual point of view than any other work of Schiller's. The talk of the soldiers in the "Lager" she pointed out to me as "just what it would be." On my faint response, "I suppose it is!" she returned, "No, you do not *suppose*, — we *know* these things;' and then gave me a specimen of what might be a navvy's talk, — "The sort of thing such people say is, 'I 'll break off your arm, and bloody your face with the stump.'"

Mrs. Bray tells the following incident, as showing her quick perception of excellence from a new and unknown source. "We were sitting," Mrs. Bray says, "one summer afternoon on the lawn at Rosehill, July, 1850, when Marian came running to us from the house with the 'Leader' newspaper in her hand. 'Here is a new poet come into the world!' she exclaimed, and sitting down with us she read from the 'Leader' the poem called 'Hymn' signed M., and ending with the fine stanza, —

> 'When I have passed a nobler life in sorrow;
> Have seen rude masses grow to fulgent spheres;
> Seen how To-day is father of To-morrow,
> And how the Ages justify the Years,
> I praise Thee, God.'

"The 'Hymn' is now reprinted in Mr. W. M. W. Call's volume of collected poems, called 'Golden Histories.'"

Kingsley's "Saint's Tragedy" was not so pop-

ular as his other works, but Miss Evans was deeply moved by it. Putting it into my hands one morning, she said, "There, read it, — *you* will care for it."

The Life of "Jean Paul Richter," published in the Catholic Series (in which the head of Christ, by De la Roche, so dear to her, figures as a vignette), was read and talked of with great interest, as was his "Flower, Fruit, and Thorn Pieces," translated by the late Mr. Edward Noel of Hampstead. Choice little bits of humour from the latter she greatly enjoyed.

Margaret Fuller's "Woman in the Nineteenth Century," I think Miss Evans gave to me. I know it interested her, as did "Emerson's Essays." On his visit to Coventry, we could not, unfortunately, accept Mr. Bray's kind invitation to meet him at Rosehill; but after he had left, Miss Evans soon came up kindly to give us her impressions of him while they were fresh in her memory. She told us he had asked her what had first awakened her to deep reflection, and when she answered, "Rousseau's Confessions," he remarked that this was very interesting, inasmuch as Carlyle had told him that very book had had the same effect upon his mind. As *I* heard Emerson's remark after his interviews with Miss Evans, it was, "That young lady has a calm, clear spirit." Intercourse, it will be seen, was kept up with my family, otherwise than through the lessons, by calls, and in little gatherings of friends in evenings, when we were favoured to hear Miss Evans sing. Her voice was not strong, and I think she preferred playing on the piano; but her low notes were effective, and there was always an elevation in the rendering.

As I knew Miss Evans, no one escaped her

notice. In her treatment of servants, for instance, she was most considerate. "They come to me," she used to say, "with all their troubles," as indeed did her friends generally, — sometimes, she would confess, to an extent that quite oppressed her. When any object of charity came under her notice, and power to help was within her reach, she was very prompt in rendering it. Our servant's brother or sister, or both of them, died, leaving children dependent on friends themselves poor. Miss Evans at once offered to provide clothing and school-fees for one of these, a chubby-faced little girl four or five years of age. Unexpectedly, however, an aunt at a distance proposed to adopt the child. I recollect taking her to say good-bye to her would-be benefactress, and can see her now standing still and subdued in her black frock and cape, with Miss Evans kneeling down by her, and saying, after giving her some money, "Then I suppose there is nothing else we can do for her."

My husband's mother, who was a member of the Society of Friends, established, with the help of her daughters and a few others interested, an Industrial Home for girls about the age of fourteen. It was in the year 1843, and was, therefore, one of the first institutions of the kind in England. The model was taken from something of the same order attempted by a young girl in France. The girls were, as far as practicable, to maintain themselves, working under conditions of comfort and protection more attainable than in their own homes. The idea was new; the Home could not be started without funds, and my mother undertook to collect for it in her own neighbourhood. In a letter to me, written at this time, she tells me she is "not doing much to help dear Mrs. Cash," there being

" a prejudice against the scheme; " but adds, " This morning Miss Evans called, and brought me two guineas from her father." I tell of this, as one among many indications of Miss Evans's ever-growing zeal to serve humanity in a broader way, motived as *she* felt by a higher aim than what she termed " desire to save one's soul by making up coarse flannel for the poor."

In these broad views — in this desire to bring her less advantaged neighbours nearer to her own level, to meet them on common ground, to raise them above the liability to eleemosynary charity — she had Mr. Bray's full sympathy. To me she dwelt frequently upon his genuine benevolence, upon his ways of advancing the interests of the working-men, as being in her judgment wise and good. She visited periodically, in turn with Mrs. Bray, myself, and a few others, an infant-school which Mr. Bray had helped to start; and although this sort of work was so little suited to her, yet so much did she feel the duty of living for others, especially the less privileged, that one morning she came to Mrs. Bray, expressing strongly her desire to help in *any* work that could be given her. The only thing that could be thought of was the illustration of some lessons in Natural History, on sheets of cardboard, needed then when prints of the kind were not to be procured for schools. The class of animals to be illustrated by Mrs. Bray on the sheet taken by Miss Evans was the " Rodentiæ," and at the top a squirrel was to figure, the which she undertook to draw. This I have seen, half finished, — a witness to the willing mind; proof that its proper work lay otherwhere. Lectures at the Mechanics' Institute were matters of great interest to Miss Evans; and I remember the

pleasure given her by the performance of the music of "Comus," with lecture by Professor Taylor, at our old St. Mary's Hall. In that hall, too, we heard the first lecture on total abstinence that I remember to have heard in Coventry, though of "Temperance Societies" we knew something. The lecturer was the Rev. Mr. Spencer, a clergyman at Hinton Charterhouse, near Bath, and uncle of Mr. Herbert Spencer. Miss Evans was present at the lecture, with Mr. Bray, who told me afterwards he had some difficulty in restraining her from going up, as soon as the lecture was over, to take the pledge, he thought without due consideration. "I felt," she said, speaking to me afterwards of the lecturer, "that he had got hold of a power for good that was of incalculable worth."

I need scarcely say that I received, along with lessons in German, some "rules and lessons for life" from Miss Evans. One of the first was an injunction to be accurate, — enforced with the warning that the tendency is to grow less and less so as we get older. The other was, tolerance. How well I can remember the remonstrance, "My dear child, the great lesson of life is tolerance." In the proverb, "Live and let live," she saw a principle involved, harder to act upon, she would say, than the maxims of benevolence, — I think, because bringing less credit with it.

The reading of dramas and romances naturally gives rise to discussion of their main theme. In treating of love and marriage, Miss Evans's feeling was so fine as to satisfy a young girl in her teens, with her impossible ideals. The conception of the union of two persons by so close a tie as marriage, without a previous union of minds as well as hearts, was to her dreadful. "How terrible it

must be," she once said to me, "to find one's self tied to a being whose limitations you could see, and must know were such as to prevent your ever being understood!" She thought that though in England marriages were not professedly "arrangés," they were so too often practically: young people being brought together, and receiving intimations that mutual interest was desired and expected, were apt to drift into connections on grounds not strong enough for the wear and tear of life; and this, too, among the middle as well as in the higher classes. After speaking of these and other facts, of how things were and would be, in spite of likelihood to the contrary, she would end by saying playfully, "Now remember I tell you this, and I am sixty!"

She thought the stringency of laws rendering the marriage-tie (at that date) irrevocable, practically worked injuriously; the effect being "that many wives took far less pains to please their husbands in behaviour and appearance, because they knew their own position to be invulnerable." And at a later time she spoke of marriages on the Continent, where separations did not necessarily involve discredit, as being very frequently far happier.

One claim, as she regarded it, from equals to each other, was this, the right to hear from the aggrieved, "You have ill-treated me; do you not see your conduct is not fair, looked at from my side?" Such frankness would, she said, bring about good understanding better than reticent endurance. Her own filial piety was sufficiently manifest; but of the converse obligation, that of the claim of child upon parent, she was wont to speak thus strongly. "There may be," she would

say, " conduct on the part of a parent which should exonerate his child from further obligation to him; but there cannot be action conceivable which should absolve the parent from obligation to serve his child, seeing that for that child's existence he is himself responsible." I did not at the time see the connection between this view and the change of a fundamental nature marked by Miss Evans's earlier contention for our " claim on God." The bearing of the above on orthodox religion I did not see. Some time ago, however, I came across this reflection, made by a clergyman of the Broad Church school, — that since the *claims* of children had, in the plea for schools, been based on the responsibility of parents towards them, a higher principle had been maintained on the platform than was preached from the pulpit, as the basis of the popular theology.

In my previous communication in the " Life," I have already made mention of Miss Evans's sympathy with me in my own religious difficulties; and my obligations to her were deepened by her seconding my resolve to acknowledge how much of the traditional belief had fallen away from me, and left a simpler faith. In this I found her best help when, as time passed on, my brother saw he could not conscientiously continue in the calling he had chosen. As, however, his heresies were not considered fatal, and he was esteemed by the professors and students of his college, there was for some time hesitation. In this predicament I wrote to him a little favouring compromise. My mother also wrote. I took the letters to Miss Evans before posting them. She read mine first, with no remark, and then began my mother's, reading until she came upon these words: " In the meantime let me

entreat you not to utter any sentiments, either in the pulpit or in conversation, that you do not believe to be strictly true;" on which she said, turning to me, "Look, this is the important point, what your mother says here," and I immediately put my own letter into the fire. "What are you doing?" she quickly said; and when I answered, "You are right, — my mother's letter is to the point, and that only need go," she nodded assent, and, keeping it, sent it enclosed with a few lines from herself.

I knew what I had done, and so did she: the giving up of the ministry to a young man without other resources was no light matter, and as I rose to go, she said, "These are the tragedies for which the world cares so little, but which are so much to me."

More than twenty years elapsed before I had again the privilege of seeing George Eliot, and that on one occasion only, after her final settlement in London. It touched me deeply to find how much she had retained of her kind interest in all that concerned me and mine, and I remarked on this to Mr. Lewes, who came to the door with my daughter and myself at parting. "Wonderful sympathy," I said. "Is it not?" said he; and when I added, inquiringly, "The power lies there?" "Unquestionably it does," was his answer; "she forgets nothing that has ever come within the curl of her eyelash: above all, she forgets no one who has ever spoken to her one kind word."

END OF VOL. I GEORGE ELIOT'S LIFE

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